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Fifty-second session
Items 39, 99, 100 and 101
of the provisional agenda*

OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 3 September 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to the enclosed document which reflects the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the legal regime of the Caspian Sea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 39, 99, 100 and 101 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Majid TAKHT-RAVANCHI
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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ANNEX

Position of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the legal regime of the Caspian Sea

The Caspian Sea is a body of water with a unique character that is of vital importance to its coastal States. Those States bear a common responsibility regarding its proper utilization, the development of its natural resources and the preservation of the environment.

The legal regime governing the Caspian Sea has been provided for in the Treaty of Amity concluded between Iran and Russia on 26 February 1921, as well as the Commerce and Navigation Agreement concluded between Iran and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 25 March 1940 and the letters annexed thereto. In those instruments, the Caspian Sea, except for the 10-mile exclusive fishery zone, was described as an Iran-Soviet sea. In accordance with the rules and principles of international law, those agreements are binding on all successor States of the former Soviet Union.

It should be recalled that the successor States of the former USSR, in accordance with the Alma Ata Declaration of 21 December 1991 (A/47/60-S/23329, annex II), have guaranteed "the discharge of the international obligations deriving from treaties and agreements concluded by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics". Therefore, the above-mentioned agreements continue to be binding on the Islamic Republic of Iran and on the Russian Federation, as they are binding on the other republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States which are the coastal States of the Caspian Sea.

As clearly stated in the communiqué issued at Ashgabat by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five coastal States on 12 November 1996, the complementation of the legal regime of the Caspian Sea, following the dismemberment of the USSR, can occur only through the unanimous decision of the five coastal States.

On the basis of the foregoing, as long as the legal regime of the Caspian Sea has not been complemented, any measure adopted by the coastal States in contravention of the existing legal regime or any action taken without the agreement of all coastal States shall not be acceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Not only do such measures and actions not establish a basis for any right or any claim, but the full responsibility for the consequences of such illegal measures and actions, including damages caused to other coastal States, the natural resources and the environment of the Caspian Sea, rests with States violating its legal regime.

In view of the vital importance of the Caspian Sea to its coastal States and considering the vulnerability of the environment of that body of water with its unique character, the Islamic Republic of Iran, following the dissolution of the USSR, has made consistent efforts to expedite the updating process of the legal regime of the Caspian Sea and has persistently invited the cooperation and understanding of the other coastal States to that end.

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 3 September 1997 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and with reference to the joint statement signed by the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan on 27 February 1997 (A/52/93, annex), relating to the legal status of the Caspian Sea, I wish to draw your attention to the following points:

The legal regime governing the Caspian Sea has been provided for in the Treaty of Amity concluded between Iran and Russia on 26 February 1921, as well as the Iran-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Commerce and Navigation Agreement of 25 March 1940 and the letters annexed thereto. In accordance with those instruments, the Caspian Sea, except for a 10-mile exclusive fishery zone, has been described as an Iran-Soviet Sea.

It should be recalled that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five coastal States of the Caspian Sea, at their meeting at Ashgabat on 12 November 1996, agreed that the legal regime of the Caspian Sea, following the dismemberment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, should be complemented on the basis of unanimous decision of the five coastal States.

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

However, it must be stated that as long as the existing legal regime is not complemented, any other arrangements or exploitation of the Caspian Sea, in contravention of its current regime, will not be acceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran and that full responsibility for damages caused to other coastal States as a result of illegal activities in the Caspian Sea rests with States violating the Caspian Sea legal regime.

In view of the above-mentioned points, my Government considers paragraph 1 of the joint statement signed by the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan relating to "the delimitation of administrative and territorial borders along a line running through the middle of the Sea" as a step in violation of the existing legal regime and declares that it bears no legal value and shall not affect, directly or indirectly, the existing legal regime and any future agreement that may be concluded among the five coastal States.

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 39, 99, 100, and 101 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Majid TAKHT-RAVANCHI
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Advancement of women

Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in resolution 50/165 of 22 December 1995 on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with Member States and relevant United Nations organizations, a report on the implementation of the resolution and to submit it, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, taking into account possible measures to improve the reporting procedure.

2. Four previous reports by the Secretary-General on the question of rural women and development have been considered by the General Assembly, beginning in 1985. The role of rural women in development has also been addressed by recent United Nations global conferences and is reflected in their final documents.[1] Notably, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, called upon Governments to enhance, at the national and local levels, rural women's income-generating potential by facilitating their equal access to and control over productive resources, land, credit, capital, property rights, development programmes and cooperative structures.[2] Governments also agreed, *inter alia*, to undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land and other property, credit, natural resources and appropriate technologies.[3] In article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) States Parties are called upon to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development.

3. The present report examines progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/165. It is based upon information made available by Governments, including national action plans to follow up the Beijing Conference, reports submitted under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the results of recent United Nations world conferences and the non-governmental Micro-Credit Summit held at Washington, D.C., from 2 to 4 February 1997. It builds on the analysis contained in previous reports to the General Assembly on this topic.

4. The present report seeks to examine four issues, the importance of which is growing for rural women: agriculture and food security; access to productive resources; female heads of household and migration; and decision-making. Other aspects of the situation of rural women, namely, health-related issues and access to national machineries, will be taken up in the preparation of the reports on these critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action, which are to be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session.

5. Governments and international organizations are increasingly cognizant of the critical role of rural women in development and have sought to implement measures that will enhance their status, taking into account issues that are of vital importance to development, such as food security and the impact of rural-urban migration. There is also growing appreciation of the intricate nature of the relationship between gender and socio-economic and political development. This is manifested by greater attention being paid to the range of factors influencing food security, including access by both women and men to land, credit, agricultural input, extension services, education and training, and productive employment. Access to appropriate technology and decision-making as, for example, in the reflection of the needs and interests of rural women, and the constraints faced by them, in relevant policy-making processes and laws is also increasingly seen as essential for the advancement of women and for development. This was emphasized by the Commission on the Status of Women in its agreed conclusions on women and environment in 1997. The Commission stated that laws should be designed and revised to ensure that women have equal access to and control over land, unmediated by male relatives, in order to end land rights discrimination. Women should be accorded secure use rights and should be fully represented in decision-making bodies that allocate land and other forms of property, credit, information and new technologies.[4]

6. Although rural women are often at the beginning of the food production chain, they are at the end of the distribution chain for the productive resources and social services that are essential to their critical role in the alleviation of poverty through the production of food for consumption by rural households and, by extension, surpluses to be consumed by the nation. Much of their work, whether regular or seasonal, is invisible, that is, unpaid, and therefore not counted in official statistics and methodologies. Quantitative and qualitative assessments of the roles of women do not yet fully capture the complexity, magnitude and comprehensive nature of their contributions. Therefore, progress in validating their roles and stake in development through, for example, the formulation, implementation and adjustment

of policies which accurately address their needs, aspirations and constraints and the allocation of adequate budgetary resources, does not yet match either national or international interests in promoting sustainable development. Some of these issues will be explored in the present report.

II. Role of rural women in agriculture and food security

7. Rural women in developing countries are responsible for more than 55 per cent of the food grown and comprise 67 per cent of the agricultural labour force. Sixty-eight per cent of developing country populations live and earn their living in rural areas, while for the least developed countries the figure is 80 per cent. Despite the global trend towards rapid urbanization, developing countries are still largely rural and will continue to be so until 2015.[5]

8. Low-paying jobs and lack of regular employment for women often translate into inadequate food supplies and poor family nutrition. This highlights the importance of rural on-farm and off-farm employment, as well as improving wage income. Improving the technical skills of women through education and training also improves their access to better jobs.[6] Indeed, off-farm employment is an important alternative for women who have little or no access to land or who live in environments where farming or livestock is limited. Although many of these women are employed as wage labourers on large farms or in local factories, employment is often temporary and the wages low. Many rural women are marginalized into informal sector work in rural, urban and peri-urban areas as petty traders, street vendors, construction workers and domestic servants.

9. Men's control over resources persists. Indeed, the designation of men as heads of household ensures their control of most household economic resources and often results in men being the indirect recipients of project resources which target women and female-headed households. This is the case even when men are not the primary source of household income and when women manage important household resources and engage in various household enterprises on a relatively autonomous basis. In most societies, in addition to controlling land, men still control major livestock resources, a large share of subsistence output and most of the household income. Rural women are frequently dependent on men for final decisions about most of the activities that affect their lives and those of their communities.

10. The roles of women in agriculture vary regionally and from country to country, and most of their labour is in unpaid subsistence production in which their contributions tend to be underestimated. In some cases, they have complementary roles with men, sharing or dividing tasks in the production of crops, care of animals and forestry management. Gender-role differentiation may vary, depending on circumstances. For example, when cash cropping or mechanization is introduced, the tendency is for women's responsibilities, in terms of the variety and number of tasks associated with household food production, to increase. They may also be engaged in small-scale cash cropping using simple technology.

11. Women in sub-Saharan Africa contribute 60 to 80 per cent of labour in food production for both household consumption and sale, while the proportion of women involved in the economically active agricultural labour force ranges from 48 per cent in Burkina Faso to 73 per cent in the Congo. There may be role differentiation in such tasks as site clearing and land preparation, or men and women may participate equally in the work as in the United Republic of Tanzania. Men are often responsible for large livestock while women care for smaller animals, including poultry, sheep and goats, and feed and milk all livestock. Men are usually charged with offshore fishing, while women may be responsible for making and repairing nets, fish processing and river fishing.

12. Asian women account for about 50 per cent of food production, with variations among countries: from 35 per cent of the agricultural labour force in Malaysia, for example, to 60 per cent in Thailand. In South-East Asia, women play major roles in the sowing, transplanting, harvesting and processing of rice.[7] Complementary gender roles are found in some areas, as in Nepal where women exclusively gather fodder for buffalo, ready their animals for ploughing and tend to cattle and other livestock. Nepalese women also transplant seedlings, participate in harvesting and threshing and play a major role in horticulture. In South and South-East Asia, women make up a large proportion of the labour force on tea, rubber and fruit plantations.

13. There are wide variations in women's participation in agriculture in the Pacific, although women play prominent roles in food marketing and fisheries. Women in Papua New Guinea, for example, account for 71 per cent of the agricultural labour force of the population, which is 87 per cent rural. In contrast, women in Fiji comprise 38 per cent of the agricultural labour force. Data collection methods have not, however, fully captured the extent of women's contribution to household food production and their unpaid labour on family farms.[8]

14. A small percentage of European women and men are employed in agriculture. The range for the economically active population of the States members of the European Union is from 2.3 per cent in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to 21.9 per cent in Greece, in 1992. Women's participation ranged from 10.4 per cent in Ireland to 44.5 per cent in Greece in 1990. In Central and Eastern Europe, women's participation in the agricultural labour force ranged from 4 per cent in Slovenia to 57 per cent in Albania. An increasing number of women are leaving farming and those who remain are becoming more commercially oriented.[9]

15. The proportion of workers employed in agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean has declined over the past few decades, from 55 per cent in 1950 to 25 per cent in 1990. Women are engaged mainly in subsistence farming, poultry and raising small livestock for domestic consumption.[10]

16. Women's contributions in some countries are mainly in unpaid subsistence food production which has been shown to be considerable when unpaid and seasonal labour are taken into account. In Turkey, for example, women account for 55.3 per cent of unpaid agricultural labour; in Morocco, for 53.2 per cent; in Egypt, for 50.7 per cent; in Lebanon, for 40.7 per cent; in the Sudan, for 34.7 per cent; in Iraq, for 30.7 per cent; and in Mauritania for 28 per cent. Their tasks are those which can be carried out manually or with simple tools.[11]

17. The amount of land that farmers cultivate is directly related to labour availability – their own and that of family members and hired workers. Women's heavier workloads, owing to their productive and reproductive responsibilities, their limited access to financial resources and a range of factors associated with gender discrimination, prevent them from hiring paid labour which limits the expansion of agricultural production. This results in the need to draw upon the labour of children which may influence rates of school attendance, especially by girls.

18. Although women make substantial labour contributions to agricultural production, development policies tend to favour export crops to earn foreign exchange, and agricultural research tends to address the improvement of production and technologies for commercial production. Women's needs therefore tend to be neglected and they have limited access to technical knowledge and innovations, including irrigation, machinery, farming techniques and extension services.

19. Extension services have traditionally not been particularly successful in reaching women farmers since they have targeted farmers who own land and can obtain credit to invest in input and technology. Women's limited access to these resources has led to their being bypassed by extension services. Women are further hampered by the orientation of extension towards alleviating or making more efficient male tasks in, for example, cash crop cultivation or commercial fishing, as well as by low levels of education which prevent them from engaging in activities that require literacy and numeracy skills.[12]

20. Although women farmers produce up to 80 per cent of the food in some countries, they receive only 2 to 13 per cent of extension services. In Asia, only 3 per cent of extension time and resources are allocated to women, compared to a global average of 5 per cent.[13] Data compiled by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) show that, even where the contribution of women to agriculture is recognized, support services are weak and slow to respond to their needs.[14] New technologies, Green Revolution packages of "miracle seeds", fertilizer and irrigation have generally been made available to male commercial farmers, rather than to women subsistence farmers.

III. Access to productive resources

A. Rural women's access to land

21. Although many developing countries have legally affirmed a woman's right to own land, gender asymmetry in access to and control of land is one of the main obstacles to the full participation of women in rural development and to strengthening their role in ensuring national and household food security. Land tenure practices usually ensure male control of activities and the allocation of the best land and agricultural input for export crops. Inheritance practices, whereby land traditionally passes from father to son, further reinforce male control.

22. Land reform measures have not been gender neutral and women have been excluded to varying degrees either *de jure* or de facto. Rural women's customary land rights have been threatened by agrarian reform programmes which have tended to redistribute land titles primarily to men. While reform legislation does not in general explicitly discriminate against women, the application of the law in the context of existing customs and inheritance laws often results in discrimination against women in landholding.

23. Demographic and environmental factors, as well as rising demand for scarce resources owing to increased land values, have contributed to the commercialization of land markets in some regions, thereby impeding women's access and ownership to land. Indeed, efforts to improve women's rights to land have been neutralized by growing population pressure on increasingly depleted land and the fact that, as the quality of the land deteriorates, women in many rural settings are managing smaller plots (see also A/48/187-E/1993/76, para. 83).

24. Some positive and innovative measures have, however, been introduced in this area. There have been major policy changes in agrarian reform whereby women are often defined as joint beneficiaries, and granted either the right to own land in their own right or jointly with men. Legal changes are enabling women in various developing countries to open bank accounts in their own names, take court action on their own or inherit their father's property. Moreover, some organizations of the United Nations system have implemented projects in developing countries in which reclaimed land has been allocated to women, and they have also targeted projects at marginal and landless women.[15] The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), for example, is currently conducting a literature review and compiling an annotated bibliography on women's rights to land. Four modules on gender, population and land tenure issues have recently been completed by FAO.

25. Limited land ownership and insecurity of tenure are two factors that restrict investment and technological innovation among women farmers.[16] Land ownership facilitates access to a range of benefits and opportunities and the disproportionate enjoyment by men of rights to land often excludes women from those benefits and opportunities. Women typically farm small, dispersed or remote plots of fragmented land which provide them with little incentive to invest or to adopt new technologies. Without title to land, women's access to agricultural support services, particularly credit and extension services where land ownership is expected as collateral or as a precondition, is hindered. Furthermore, extension workers may be reluctant to service small, geographically dispersed and isolated plots of land.[17]

B. Rural women's access to credit

26. Improvement in the situation of rural women is dependent on increased levels of income which requires a mix of policy programmes. One such policy programme is access to credit, which is crucial in raising the productivity of any economic activity and consequently the income levels of those involved. Rural women are, in most cases, unable to meet collateral requirements.

27. This situation is particularly acute for rural women who are the main producers for household consumption. Furthermore, limited incomes, lack of information and high rates of illiteracy, as well as exclusion from the cooperatives and farmer groups through which loans and extension are channelled, further restrict women's access to credit from financial institutions and agencies. In the less developed countries of Africa, where women account for more than 60 per cent of the agricultural labour force and contribute 80 per cent of total food production, they receive less than 10 per cent of the credit allocated to small-scale farmers.[18] In five East and Central African countries, women received only 1 per cent of the total credit in agriculture.[19]

28. In order to increase rural women's productivity to fully meet household demand and still retain a surplus to sell in the market, and thus raise their income levels, credit has to be made accessible to them. Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations provide credit to rural women who do not have collateral through micro-finance schemes. Micro-finance is obtained through programmes and institutions which lend small amounts, no more than a few hundred dollars, to the poor, especially rural women, in rotating schemes that do not require collateral. The success of micro-finance can be attributed to the replication of the positive aspects of traditional informal sector lending – small loans, no paper work, no investment restrictions, no collateral requirements and the minimization of risk.[20] Micro-finance is a more secure, reliable and attractive alternative to traditional savings clubs and credit schemes which can be subject to fraud, mismanagement and group disbandment.

29. Another framework that has enabled women to gain access to credit without collateral is women's agricultural and income-generating cooperatives. When women form small cooperatives to market and, in some instances, produce together, they are better able to attract credit and extension agencies which can initiate programmes for women. Financial institutions are more likely to disburse credit, based on a record of sustained income and repayment, to a group of women rather than to an individual. It is worth noting that, through the achievement of economies of scale within the framework of agricultural and other income-generating cooperatives, rural women have increased their incomes, even without access to credit. The establishment of women's cooperatives, however, requires a considerable amount of effort by Governments or non-governmental organizations, in addition to the women's own efforts.

30. Research suggests that, with increased income, rural women invest more in household consumption and human capital development, providing better access to food, education and health-care services, including family planning services, safe water and sanitation to the household.[21] For example, an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) study concluded that the food security of households is usually dependent on women's earnings, and that low-paying jobs and a lack of regular employment for rural women often means inadequate food security and poor nutrition.[22] It has also been observed that

> "... increased income earned by a low-income mother translates into a chain of positive improvements for her family. This chain starts with her capacity to purchase more food. A better diet and improved nutrition stimulate better health. Improved health results in greater resistance to disease, higher energy, greater capacity for work and learning and thus enhanced productivity. As family nutrition and health are stabilized, incremental investments in the education of children are almost certain to follow. Close behind education expenditures come investments in home improvements. Finally, these outcomes are paralleled by a near-total transformation of the borrower's self-respect".[23]

31. The following are examples of instances where increased income, owing to access to micro-finance, has had a positive impact on the situation of rural women. A survey of female participants in the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA)/El Salvador micro-finance programme found that 60 per cent of those interviewed felt that they received greater respect at home after enrolling in the programme and contributed more significantly to household income and decision-making,[24] and 60 per cent of the participants in a Freedom from Hunger programme in Mali indicated greater involvement in household financial decision-making compared to 19 per cent of non-participants.[25] A micro-finance programme in Viet Nam funded by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) resulted in 97 per cent of the daughters of borrowers attending school, as compared with 73 per cent of non-borrowers. An Egyptian programme provided micro-finance to women only after they enrolled their children in school.[26]

32. Micro-finance has become an important instrument of poverty alleviation, especially for rural women. According to the Micro-credit Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, programmes reach an estimated 8 million of the very poor, particularly women.[27] Micro-finance programmes and institutions have been targeting women, a reflection of their role in food production and small-scale, or micro, enterprise, and women as a group have consistently demonstrated superior repayment records and credit-worthiness.[28] A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Women's World Banking survey in 17 countries identified 98 institutions which had 85 per cent loan repayment rates, an average loan size of US$ 280, and 62 per cent female borrowers.[29] A micro-credit pilot project, funded by the French Development Fund in Burkina Faso and Guinea, had a 98 per cent repayment rate. The key to success has been identified as collective responsibility for repayment, peer pressure and social cohesion.[30]

33. The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is the most successful micro-finance programme targeting poor rural women through the disbursement of small loans averaging about US$ 140. Ninety-four per cent of its 2 million borrowers are women. Operating with a staff of over 12,000 in 1,048 branches, the Grameen Bank has disbursed US$ 1.5 billion to the poorest in more than half of the villages (35,000) in Bangladesh, and maintained a loan recovery rate of more than 98 per cent. Grameen Bank borrowers have steadily improved their lives, and half of them have been able to transcend the poverty line.[31]

34. Micro-finance programmes have other benefits, including that of providing women with valuable exposure to legal literacy and commercial know-how, and participation in and interaction with the decision-making processes in their local communities. Micro-finance programmes, however, are no panacea for rural women's development and empowerment. They should be implemented as part of a mix of policies, including equitable property rights and the development of infrastructure. The current total portfolio in micro-loans by financial intermediaries accounts for only US$ 2.5 billion. If only 10 per cent of all low-income entrepreneurs were to have access to institutional finance by the year 2005, US$ 12.5 billion would be needed, and roughly US$ 90 billion would be needed to reach 30 per cent of those entrepreneurs by 2025.[32]

IV. Female-headed households and migration

35. The deterioration in living standards of the increasing number of female-headed households is related to a number of factors, including male out-migration and reduced labour availability and, therefore, lower household productivity. Women work smaller and less fertile landholdings and their

households are often more susceptible to poverty than those headed by men owing to women's lower levels of education, skills and limited access to productive employment, resources and services. On the other hand, women spend a higher proportion of their income on food. Therefore, members of female-headed households are more likely to have a better nutritional status than households headed by men.

36. The migration of men from rural areas is contributing to the dominance of women in agricultural production and the increasing number of female-headed households. Globalization, the growth of multinational export manufacturing and economic policies that favour the development of industry over agriculture have contributed to rural out-migration. This includes both internal and international migration, for example, to mining centres, commercial farms, fishing and other enterprises.

37. The impact of male migration is significant in changing the demographics of rural areas. It is projected that, in most regions, the proportion of women in rural populations will continue to increase to the year 2025. Globally, the projected increase is from 49.5 per cent in 1990 to 50.2 per cent by 2025. In Africa, the proportion is projected to rise from the 1990 level of 50.8 per cent women to 51.2 per cent by 2025; in Asia, from 49.1 per cent to 50.1 per cent by 2025; and in Western Asia, from 50.4 per cent in 1990 to 51.4 per cent by 2025. In South-East Asia, the proportion of rural women (50.3 per cent in 1990) is projected to remain the same by 2025. In contrast, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the proportion of males in rural areas was 52 per cent in 1990 and is projected to rise to 52.8 per cent by 2025.[33]

38. The increasing incidence of female-headed households is accompanied by the increasing responsibility of women for generating income and ensuring the well-being of their families. It is estimated that the incidence of poverty in female-headed households is 50 per cent greater than in male-headed households.[34] Female-headed households tend to be poorer, own less land and often lack access to credit and technology.

39. Females as heads of households emerged as an early indicator of women's poverty because it was the only one that was visible in household-based approaches to poverty. Other factors contributing to the feminization of rural poverty include cutbacks in essential services resulting from restructuring policies; environmental degradation, which affects smallholder and subsistence agriculture in which women predominate; women's limited access to productive resources and services; and armed conflicts, which contribute to the growing number of refugee women forced to provide for their families under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

40. Moreover, the difficulties experienced by rural women in securing access to land are even greater for female heads of rural households. Not only may there be no legal provisions for women to keep land in the case of a husband's death, separation or divorce, but a review of land reform programmes in various countries indicates that female heads of households seldom have access to land, regardless of whether the sex of the beneficiary is specified by law. Lack of access to land is particularly critical to the rural households that are female-headed owing to widowhood, divorce, desertion or male out-migration.[35] Many female heads of households are landless or have marginal holdings, and land inheritance often takes place on the basis of male lineage.[36] Female-headed households frequently work less land, have access to fewer items of farm equipment, and own fewer livestock.[37]

41. Studies in Kenya and Malawi have shown that household food security and the nutritional status of individual members tend to be significantly better in female-headed households, since women tend to spend a greater proportion of their income on food. One of the findings is that income controlled by women has a positive impact on household caloric intake, an impact which is over and above the level of income effect. This suggests that gender may influence the composition of diets within households, as indicated by the higher proportion of food budgets allocated to non-food consumption by male-headed households and the higher proportion of calories directed to young children by poorer, de facto female-headed households.[38]

42. There is considerable variation in the percentage of female-headed households in African countries, ranging from 10 per cent in the Niger to 72 per cent in Lesotho, with an average of 31 per cent for the region.[39] In Asia and the Pacific, the proportion is lower, at 9 per cent in the 1980s and at 14 per cent when India and China are excluded. Farming is declining in Europe, with a decrease in the number of men and women employed in agriculture. As a result of male out-migration and employment in off-farm employment, European women in rural areas are assuming an increasingly important role and they are becoming more educated and professional in their management and marketing techniques.

43. Male migration, spousal abandonment and single motherhood are contributing to significant increases in female-headed households in Latin America and the Caribbean. The average is 17 per cent but a 1994 study by

the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture found percentages ranging from 29.1 per cent to 55 per cent in some countries.[40] In the Near East, the proportion of female-headed households is small but increasing as a result of temporary and permanent rural-urban migration by men. Such households account for 16 per cent or less in Cyprus, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia. Only in Pakistan and the Sudan does the percentage exceed 20 per cent.[41]

V. Participation of rural women in community activities and decision-making processes

44. There are various types of organizations which address the needs of rural women, ranging from traditional groups focusing on women's social and reproductive roles; women's empowerment groups; groups which are predominantly male and address production, marketing and technical skills; and cooperatives. Increasing the participation of rural women in decision-making processes requires collective action through and participation in local organizations. This includes the village, ward and district levels of local government, as well as cooperatives, farmers associations, and credit and savings associations. It also entails the development of skills, including assertiveness, negotiation and leadership training; financial and managerial skills; and intervention, through political participation, advocacy, community initiatives and collective action.[42]

45. Examples of such organizations include the establishment by rural women in Fiji of a cooperative thrift and credit society through which they mobilized savings and acquired loans. In India, collective action by women's groups enabled them to express their dissatisfaction with the administration of community affairs and be represented in the panchayats – locally elected councils – which had a positive demonstration effect on women and their organizations at the village level,[43] and to demand the reservation of about 33 per cent of seats for women in local bodies, as well as state and national legislatures.[44]

46. Membership in all-women's groups provides rural women with the opportunity to meet other women and develop networks, and provides opportunities for self-expression in societies in which men and women do not freely associate. Women's groups also facilitate the growth of community development organizations in many instances, and are an effective means of increasing rural women's role in decision-making and ensuring recognition of their right to participate in community affairs on an equal basis with men. Such participation in turn increases women's visibility, enables them to learn management skills and methods for earning and saving income, and strengthens their bargaining power when seeking access to land, credit, agricultural and extension services, and training.

47. Groups which address production, marketing and technical skills such as, for example, master farmers clubs, extension groups and advocacy groups, may lobby for increased producer prices. These groups have easier access to the infrastructure, including transport and marketing facilities, and the services associated with mainstream rural development that are not readily accessible to women. Women are often excluded from these groups by membership criteria that specify land ownership, master farmer certification, or by their low level of education and cultural barriers. Women may also be reluctant to join such groups because of competing demands on their time from productive and reproductive activities.

48. Cooperatives are another means of increasing agricultural production. When women form small cooperatives to market and produce collectively, they are better able to gain access to credit and extension services. Credit institutions and extension services rationalize their resources and services by channelling them through groups. Women are, therefore, better able to access the services and resources that they need in order to enhance household and national food security.

49. Networking among national women's organizations and rural women's organizations strengthens the credibility, impact and effectiveness of both. Linkages can also be made at the provincial, district and local levels among civil society organizations and governmental institutions through the establishment of decentralized units of national machineries within various ministries and governmental agencies.

50. National machineries are essential for viable rural development strategies. They ensure that women's contributions, priorities and needs are effectively addressed and incorporated into policies and programmes. This process, especially when coupled with sufficient human, technical and financial resources, may enable the national machinery to play a catalytic and strategic role in developing nationwide networks of rural women and men in order to facilitate the implementation of food and agricultural development programmes. In addition to promoting gender sensitivity training and programmes in governmental and non-governmental organizations, national machineries can

communicate and coordinate information about best practices with international organizations. Other activities may include the promotion of research emphasizing rural women's productive and reproductive roles, as well as improving the collection and quality of sex disaggregated data.

51. National machineries can also coordinate their activities with international organizations and national and international non-governmental organizations. Women's groups play an important role in the collection and dissemination of information about the needs and activities of rural women at all levels, activities which are now facilitated by electronic communications technology. Such linkages can facilitate the flow of resources and information to rural women, overcome the lower status of national women's machineries among other governmental agencies, and reduce the isolation of women's units from sectoral programmes and activities at the field level.

52. Democratic practices provide an opportunity to redress gender imbalances in rural areas, where educational levels are lower and access to information is limited. Women's participation in public life can be increased by strengthening rural women's associations, legal literacy training, and civic and political education. The legal recognition of women's groups is a prerequisite to the formation of a women's federation, organized along professional lines. The role of rural women in democratization can also be the central theme of legal literacy programmes. Measures can be taken to ensure that women participate in the administration of rural development projects, and in the formulation of programmes and policies at both the national and local levels. Women's organizations and donor agencies can, through such women, influence the placement of gender issues on the agenda of public policy makers at all levels.

53. All possible means of strengthening rural women's participation in political and economic decision-making can be pursued simultaneously. Networks, with the support of electronic communications, can provide an efficient means of exchanging information and lending support. Women's groups can learn from each other and external resources can be directed towards facilitating their exchanges. Women's groups can be encouraged to take their experiences and agendas to political bodies, to explain their priorities, seek recognition, legitimacy and assistance, and offer their assistance and involvement in policy formulation, planning and decision-making.[45]

54. Limited data are available on women's representation in local and subnational levels of government. The representation of female councillors in local government ranged from 10 per cent to 29 per cent, while the proportion of female mayors ranged from 4 per cent to 17 per cent.[46] At the national level, the number of female cabinet ministers throughout the world has doubled, from 3.4 per cent in 1987 to 6.8 per cent in 1996, but there were only four female Ministers of Agriculture as at January 1996.[47]

55. In international organizations concerned with rural women's issues, the representation of women managers has generally been low. While the World Food Programme (WFP) had achieved a critical mass of 31.5 per cent, FAO had 3 per cent representation and at IFAD there were no women at the senior management level, D-2 and above, as at 31 December 1995.[48]

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

56. The present report underlines the critical importance of reconciling and strengthening the productive and reproductive capacity of women farmers and entrepreneurs to improve their situation. Although much of their contribution is unrecognized and unpaid, rural women play critical roles in household and national food security. They are the major producers and preparers of food; they generate income to facilitate access to food; and they ensure that household nutritional requirements are met, and, therefore, that the health of children and other family members is protected. Strategies to facilitate their access to productive resources must be comprehensive, taking full account of their disadvantaged position, enormous contributions and potential.

57. The development of legal measures, policies and administrative regulations to guarantee rural women equal and secure rights of access to land is a priority. This may involve designating women as individual or joint owners of plots of land, granting women separate tenancy rights in land reform and resettlement schemes, guaranteeing their right to claim a fair share of the family resources upon divorce, abandonment or widowhood, and recognizing de facto female-headed households as having the right to equal access to productive resources.

58. Increasing the awareness of rural women of their rights and improving their knowledge of the legal system empowers them by developing their capacity to assess critically the law, interpret the meaning of their rights and participate more fully in political processes. It imparts and strengthens the skills needed to assert those rights and facilitates the mobilization of women to work for the

removal of substantive and structural obstacles to their participation.

59. Data, disaggregated by sex on differentials in access to productive resources, including land and credit, are a prerequisite to effective policy formulation and implementation and service delivery. Particular attention should be devoted to the gender dimensions of rural out-migration and its impact on female-headed households, labour availability and production. Methodologies should be developed to explore the relationship between on-farm and off-farm employment and its contribution to sustainable rural livelihoods.

60. National machineries are essential for inter-ministerial and interdepartmental cooperation, monitoring and evaluating the status of rural women, and coordinating and facilitating the work of governmental departments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, particularly in the formulation of policy that facilitates an increase in rural women's access to productive resources. The establishment of units at the subnational and local levels requires the surveying of national machineries within subregions, including the collection of information on mandates, programmes, staffing and financial allocations. Such information should be widely disseminated and serve as the basis for improving the operational efficiency of national machineries.[49]

61. Increasing the number of women in decision-making positions at all levels has an impact on policy formulation and increases the participation of rural women. Their increased participation in community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and cooperatives facilitates their access to productive resources, promotes food security at the household and national levels and provides leadership training for involvement in local governance.

62. Policy makers and programme staff concerned with issues affecting rural women should be provided training in gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming. Such training facilitates the understanding of the precise nature of the constraints, opportunities, needs and priorities of rural women and men in their productive and reproductive capacities. Within the United Nations, technical expertise could be provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), as well as units within other relevant United Nations organizations.

63. Rural women have a critical role to play in household and national food security. In order to maximize their contributions, they must be guaranteed access to productive resources. Governments should, therefore, undertake legal, policy and administrative reforms, in partnership with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other actors in civil society, to promote gender equality in access to productive resources, including:

(a) According women full and equal rights to own land and other property, through, *inter alia*, inheritance and land reform programmes which take full account of women's equal and secure rights to land;

(b) Taking measures to increase land availability to women and men;

(c) Revising legislation to support women's access to rural labour markets, guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value, improving working conditions, and enforcing legal standards;

(d) Articulating official government support for and demonstrating the political will to support rural women's access to productive resources and to bring gender issues into the mainstream;

(e) Reviewing and revising laws that treat women as legal minors;

(f) Eliminating discriminatory practices, licensing and price-control measures in order to improve women's access to informal sector markets;

(g) Disbursing credit directly to women, with flexible collateral arrangements;

(h) Ensuring that women's unpaid work and contributions to on-farm and off-farm production, including income generated in the informal sector, is visible and recorded in national accounts;

(i) Making appropriate technologies available to rural women and men farmers and to entrepreneurs which utilize locally available materials, follow environmentally sound practices and maximize production and efficiency without threatening jobs in the rural areas;

(j) Adopting demand-driven and participatory approaches to budgetary and resource allocation, as well as the delivery of services, in order to take into account the needs, priorities and constraints of rural populations;

(k) Increasing the number of female extension officers and agricultural researchers through affirmative action in hiring practices and increasing the number of women attending agricultural colleges in order to expand the pool of available recruits;

(l) Establishing national machineries at the highest levels of government and developing inter-ministerial and interdepartmental cooperation, as well as establishing consultative mechanisms with all other governmental sectors, in order to facilitate rural women's access to productive resources and to successfully implement integrated rural development policies;

(m) Establishing and strengthening linkages at the provincial, district and local levels among civil society organizations and governmental institutions through the decentralized units of national machineries within various ministries and governmental agencies;

(n) Providing gender sensitivity training for all policy makers and decision makers, administrators, service providers, researchers and field staff, as well as rural farmers and entrepreneurs;

(o) Increasing the collection of data disaggregated by sex in order to evaluate progress in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes and the delivery of services;

(p) Ensuring that data and other information on the nature and role of women's contributions are comprehensive, reliable and unbiased;

(q) Including among research priorities the adoption of analytical frameworks that facilitate an understanding of gender relations in rural areas;

(r) Harnessing, respecting and valuing local knowledge and incorporating it into policy, research, evaluation and decision-making at all levels.

64. With regard to future reporting on this topic, it should be noted that the 1999 world survey on the role of women in development, which will be considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, will address, *inter alia*, developments with respect to rural women.

65. Further, at its forty-third session in 1999, the Commission on the Status of Women will initiate a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be concluded in the year 2000. In that connection, the situation of rural women is expected to be assessed in the context of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action.

66. The Economic and Social Council, by its resolution 1997/60 of 25 July 1997, decided to carry out in 1999 an overall review of the theme of poverty eradication. In that review, particular attention may be paid to the contributions and needs of rural women. It may also be noted that the Council welcomed the steps already taken by the Commission on the Status of Women related to poverty eradication.

Notes

[1] See paras. 9.6, 9.8 and 9.10 of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (*Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1). The Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development calls for the creation of a favourable national and international political and legal environment, including removal of all legal impediments to the ownership of all means of production and property by women and men (see *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 14 (j)). Other measures agreed upon to eradicate rural poverty include expanding and improving land ownership through such measures as land reform and improving the security of land tenure, and ensuring the equal rights of women and men in that respect (ibid., para. 32 (a)). The programme also provides that access to credit by small rural or urban producers, landless farmers and other people with low or no income should be substantially improved, with special attention to the needs of women; this would be done by reviewing national legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks that restrict the access of people living in poverty, especially women, to credit on reasonable terms (ibid., paras. 33 and 33 (a)). The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda contain the objectives of providing legal security of tenure and equal access to land to all people, including women, and of ensuring transparent, comprehensive and accessible systems in transferring land rights and legal security of tenure (*Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (A/CONF.165/14) chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 40 (b) and (d)). The World Food Summit Plan of Action calls for the promotion of women's full and equal participation in the economy, and for that purpose the introduction and enforcement of gender-sensitive legislation providing women with secure and equal access to and control over productive resources including credit, land and water (FAO, *Report of the World Food Summit, Rome, 13-17 November 1996* (WFS 96/REP), objective 1.3 (b)). It also calls for improvement of equal access, by men and women, to land and other natural and productive resources through the effective implementation of land reform and the promotion of efficient utilization of natural and agricultural resources and resettlement on new lands (ibid., objective 1.3 (e)).

[2] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 166 (c).

[3] Ibid., para. 61 (b).

[4] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 7* (E/1997/27-E/CN.6/1997/9), chap. I, sect. C.1, agreed conclusions 1997/1, para. 24.

[5] *Women in a Changing Global Economy: 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.IV.1).

[6] Idriss Jazairy, Mohiuddin Alamgir and Theresa Panuccio, *The State of World Rural Poverty: An Inquiry into Its Causes and Consequences* (IFAD, New York University Press, 1992), p. 293.

[7] FAO, "Gender and food security; synthesis report of regional documents: Africa; Asia and Pacific; Europe; Near East; Latin America" (provisional) (Rome, 1995), pp. 7-8.

[8] Ibid., p. 8.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[11] Ibid., p. 9.

[12] FAO, "Research and extension: a gender perspective" (Rome, 1996).

[13] "The situation of the world's rural women: banking on women – facts and figures", paper prepared by IFAD for the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, held at Geneva on 25 and 26 February 1992. Only 13 per cent of extension workers globally are women, with only 7 per cent in Africa, which helps to explain why women farmers experience discrimination in extension services.

[14] FAO, "The population parameters of rural development" (Rome, 1995), p. 9.

[15] Research paper on the activities of the United Nations system on women in environment and development, prepared by the United Nations Secretariat for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (Research Paper No. 41).

[16] T. Panyotou, "Green markets: the economics of sustainable development" (San Francisco, International Centre for Economic Growth, 1993).

[17] *Women in a Changing Global Economy* ..., p. 37.

[18] UNIFEM, "Towards women's development agenda for the twenty-first century" (New York, 1995).

[19] FAO, *A Fairer Future for Rural Women* (Rome, 1995).

[20] Elizabeth Rhyne and Sharon Holt, "Women in finance and enterprise development", Education and Social Policy Department Discussion Paper No. 40 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 1994), p. 52.

[21] Sidney Ruth Schuler and Syed Hashemi, "Credit programs, women's empowerment and contraceptive use in rural Bangladesh", *Studies in Family Planning*, vol. 25, No. 2 (1994), pp. 65-76.

[22] Idriss Jazairy et al., op. cit., p. 293.

[23] Statement by John Hatch of the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA) in Costa Rica, in *The Micro-Credit Summit, 2-4 February 1997: Declaration and Plan of Action* (Washington, D.C., RESULTS Educational Fund), p. 15.

[24] International Centre for Research on Women and INSTRAW, *Credit for Women: Why is It so Important?* (Santo Domingo, INSTRAW, 1995).

[25] "Best practices in financial services to micro entrepreneurs", *What Works*, Women's World Banking Newsletter (New York), April 1994.

[26] *The Micro-Credit Summit, 2-4 February 1997: Declaration and Plan of Action* (Washington, D.C., RESULTS Educational Fund), p. 14.

[27] Ibid., p. 9.

[28] Ernest Harsch, "Micro-credit: a weapon against poverty", *Africa Recovery*, December 1996, pp. 24-25. In Cape Verde, women account for 80 per cent of informal sector employment and in Burkina Faso, for 67 per cent. In the Niger, approximately 40 per cent of all micro-enterprises are run by women.

[29] Ibid., p. 24.

[30] Ibid., p. 25.

[31] Ismail Serageldin, "The view of the Chair", *CGAP Newsletter*, No. 1 (published by the World Bank Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest).

[32] The World Bank Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest, "The missing links: financial systems that work for the majority", *Focus*, No. 3 (October 1995), p. 2.

[33] "Urban and rural areas by sex and age: the 1992 revision" (ESA/P/WP/120), pp. 41-67.

[34] FAO, "The feminization of poverty: facts, hypotheses and the art of advocacy", FAO Web site (www.fao.org), 18 June 1997, table 3.

[35] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1997* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 65.

[36] FAO, *Most Farmers in India are Women* (New Delhi, 1991), p. 16.

[37] Katrine Saito and Daphne Spurling, "Developing agricultural extension for women farmers", World Bank Discussion Paper No. 156 (Washington, D.C., 1992), p. 15.

[38] E. Kennedy and P. Peters, "Household food security and child nutrition: the interaction of income and gender of household head", *World Development*, vol. 20, No. 8, p. 1084.

[39] FAO, "Gender and food security; synthesis report of regional documents ...".

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Stephen F. Burgess and Janet C. Beilstein, "Women's voice and agency in rural Africa: small-scale communal farmers in Zimbabwe", *Women and Politics*, vol. 16, No. 2, 1996.

[43] Asian Development Bank and UNIFEM, *Gender Issues in Agriculture, Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Conference on Gender Issues in Agriculture, Manila, Philippines, 5-6 December 1990*, pp. 177-180.

[44] Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Men and Women in Politics: Democracy Still in the Making; a Comparative Study* (Geneva, 1997), p. 35.

[45] *Women in a Changing Global Economy* ..., pp. 36-37.

[46] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report, 1995* (London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 62. In local government, the Nordic countries recorded 29 per cent female councillors; in countries members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU), 16 per cent; and in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 10 per cent. The Nordic countries had 17 per cent women mayors; OECD countries, 6 per cent; EU countries, 5 per cent; and Latin American and Caribbean countries, 4 per cent.

[47] Data compiled by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, based upon January 1996 information from the *Worldwide Government Directory, 1996* (Bethesda, Maryland, Worldwide Government Directories Inc.).

[48] Personnel statistics compiled by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, 1996. See also the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session (to be issued).

[49] See the report on the Subregional Conference of Senior Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Platform for Action adopted by the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, in Central and Eastern Europe, held at Bucharest from 12 to 14 September 1996 (SRC/CEE/REP.1), pp. 11-13.

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Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/61 of 12 December 1996. It highlights issues on the status of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) and its operations.

2. In its resolution 51/61, the General Assembly commended the efforts of UNAFRI to promote and coordinate regional technical cooperation activities related to crime prevention and criminal justice systems in Africa. In addition, the Assembly reiterated the need for strengthening the Institute's capacity to support a national mechanism for crime prevention and criminal justice of African countries.

3. The 1997 report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) consultative mission to rationalize and harmonize the institutions acknowledged that UNAFRI, as a unique institution in Africa, was fully justified with respect to the needs assessment of member States.

4. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its sixth session, held at Vienna from 28 April to 9 May 1997, was informed of the continuing efforts of the Institute to contribute to crime prevention and criminal justice reform in the African countries. The report of the Commission on its sixth session[1] referred to the financial situation of the Institute which had further deteriorated and was in urgent need of attention. Many participants stressed the importance of the institutes comprising the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network, including UNAFRI, commended their work and their efforts to broaden their partnerships and called for continued support of their work.

5. The African Ministerial Workshop on Organized Crime, held at Dakar from 21 to 23 July 1997, adopted the Dakar Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Organized Transnational Crime and Corruption, in which it stressed the role of UNAFRI as a very useful vehicle for enhancing regional cooperation and coordination in the fight against crime and urged all countries of the region to comply with their obligation to support the Institute. The representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the Ministerial Workshop appealed to member States to pay their financial dues to the Institute so that it might implement its mandate and carry out its activities more effectively and efficiently.

II. Programme activities

6. The Institute's programme of work for the period 1996-1997, as prepared by the management of the Institute in consultation with the Chairman of the Governing Board, consists of the following activities: (a) general direction and management; (b) training and human resources development; (c) comparative research and policy development; (d) information and documentation services; (e) advisory services to Governments and technical cooperation; (f) international cooperation and joint activities; (g) conferences and seminars.

A. General direction and management

7. Drawing on new developments, the Institute made additional efforts to design and develop innovative approaches to raise the awareness of Governments in the area of new strategies in crime prevention and criminal justice. The Institute also developed new revenue sources in addition to contributions from member States.

8. UNAFRI continued to implement its activities and to administer its staff, funds and other resources in conformity with the stipulations of its statute and the procedures laid down in its staff rules and regulations and financial rules and regulations. In all its operations, measures were taken to ensure strict adherence to required standards of effective management practice.

9. In its resource mobilizing activities, the Institute was greatly assisted by the Government of Uganda and its direct appeals to all member States to speed up payment of their assessed contributions. Government officials also stressed the importance of member States' contributions by personal contacts with their colleagues in the Governments of other African countries.

10. The Institute, as a cost-cutting measure, had been compelled to freeze the posts of its substantive officers, thereby laying off the core Professional staff in 1996. This measure remained in force during the reporting period. Consequently, the use of consultant services was continued to supplement existing expertise in implementing activities carried out by the Institute.

B. Training and human resources development

11. The training activities that were approved for implementation in 1996 and 1997 were not executed during

1996. The University of South Africa has indicated an interest in cooperating with the Institute in the organization of training courses and seminars to develop human resources in priority areas of crime prevention and criminal justice, as requested by member States and approved by the Governing Board. Such training activities will be organized at the subregional level and paid by the Governments of participants.

12. In October 1997, the Institute is to implement the second phase of the African extradition and mutual assistance project, which includes a training course on extradition. The seminar will involve government officials responsible for extradition from all African countries with a view to raising awareness of the great importance of extradition arrangements in the prevention and control of organized transnational crime.

C. Comparative research and policy development

13. Despite its financial crisis, the Institute continued to develop the action-oriented study on the resettlement of street children (see A/51/450, para. 16). On the basis of the study a youth crime prevention initiative was established with the aim of addressing the escalating problem of urban youth crime, illicit drug abuse and violence. The Institute serves as a catalyst to various interested local groups and individuals and has promoted the active participation of street children, parents of street children, the community, law enforcement personnel and non-governmental organizations, that focus on children. The initiative received much support from the community. This support, along with the enthusiasm demonstrated by the participating youth, indicate how communities can be motivated to participate effectively in local crime prevention programmes. At the same time, the youth crime prevention initiative promoted the social integration of street children into their local communities. A first important lesson from the survey and the initiative was that local communities could actively support the reintegration of street children in their local communities if their sensitization was backed up by demonstrable life experiences. Funds permitting, the Institute is ready to prepare and publish reports on these experiences as Institute research publications, and to replicate these initiatives in several other African countries.

14. The Institute finalized its monograph on the rehabilitation of prisoners (ibid., para. 17), which is available in English and French upon request. The study on social rehabilitation in Uganda was further developed, thanks to the financial support of Uganda. Based on the results of that study, UNAFRI will assist the Government of Uganda in studying the feasibility of implementing community service as an alternative to imprisonment in that country. The reports on these initiatives may encourage other member States to request the Institute's assistance in this area.

15. As was mentioned in the previous report, the Institute cooperates with the United States Department of Justice and Department of State on a project on extradition (ibid., para. 28). The implementation of the project has proceeded according to plan with the completion of the first phase, in which the Institute collected data and information on existing extradition and mutual legal assistance arrangements of all African States.

16. The Institute cooperated with the University of South Africa on a crime victimization survey research project which supplement the ongoing Global International Crime Victimization Survey by a number of countries of sub-Saharan Africa, including Swaziland, Namibia, Lesotho and Angola. The number of African countries participating in the survey thus increased from four (Botswana, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe) to eight. The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), as the overall coordinator of the survey, will assist the Institute in the implementation of the project and the University of South Africa volunteered to mobilize the resources for the project. The project was initiated in July 1997; the project will have two phases: (a) conduct of the survey in the four countries; and (b) comparative analysis of the database of all eight countries.

17. Owing to financial constraints, the Institute had to limit its services in identifying and analysing trends and patterns of criminality. While it is evident that crime, particularly economic and organized crime in its transnational dimensions, is detrimental to the sustainable development of the African countries, financial cuts in this research area may have negative long-term consequences for the continent as a whole. The Institute continued to use every opportunity, especially its biannual newsletter and its participation in subregional, regional and international meetings, to raise the awareness of all concerned that research in this area is the basis for developing effective practical measures to combat crime, especially transnational organized crime.

D. Information and documentation services

18. The Institute, with the assistance of the United States National Institute of Justice (NIJ), set up a Web site on the

Internet. NIJ also assisted the Institute in providing the infrastructure and technical assistance necessary to link the Institute with the UNOJUST home page on the Internet, thereby strengthening the communication capacity of the Institute, as much information is shared by using this new technology. NIJ has greatly facilitated the further development of the Institute's library and data bank, all of which are at the service of the African countries. Funds from NIJ helped the Institute to retain, on a part-time basis, the services of an information/documentation adviser.

19. The Institute participated in a workshop for all programme network institutes webmaster technical staff on UNOJUST, which was held during the sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

20. Volume 7, Number 2, of the Institute's biannual newsletter was published in English and French, and received wide distribution. Volume 8, Numbers 1 and 2, will be published and distributed in October 1997.

E. Advisory services to Governments and technical cooperation

21. Owing to budgetary constraints, the institute was unable to undertake advisory missions in 1996. Similarly, the economic and financial situation of many African countries discouraged them from requesting advisory services at their own expense.

F. International cooperation and joint activities

22. The Institute continued to give high priority to improvement and further strengthening of cooperation and collaboration between UNAFRI and the institutes comprising the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network. This involved, *inter alia*, the exchange of expertise, information, views and experience among organizations regarding crime prevention and criminal justice.

23. The Institute cooperated in a number of joint activities during the reporting period. An African Ministerial Workshop on Corruption and Organized Transnational Crime was organized by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the United Nations Secretariat and was held at Dakar from 21 to 25 July 1997, as a follow-up to the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime. The Institute was involved in its preparation and actively participated in the workshop, which was attended by delegations from 47 African States, 25 of them at the ministerial level. The workshop adopted the Dakar Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Organized Crime and Corruption.

24. The International Centre for Crime Prevention sponsored a seminar at Ouagadougou from 22 to 25 January 1997 for senior police officials from six francophone countries of West Africa on the theme "Public Security and Crime Prevention: Roles and Responsibilities of the Police and the Local Authorities in the Context of Democratization". The Institute's research adviser served as a resource person. The 60 participants shared their concerns about the increasing crime problems in urban areas. The seminar considered responsive approaches for promoting and supporting partnerships between municipalities, police, other institutions and the communities towards lasting solutions to violence and insecurity.

25. The Government of Argentina and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division organized an ad hoc expert group meeting on "Criminal Justice Statistics and Computerization of Information: Improving National and International Data Collection and Exchange", at Buenos Aires, from 10 to 13 March 1997. The Institute's research adviser participated as an expert. A direct outcome of the meeting was the appointment of an eight-member ad hoc editorial board, which included a representative of the Institute, which was mandated to prepare a manual for the development of criminal justice statistics.

26. The Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division and UNDCP are to sponsor a training seminar on "The ECOWAS Convention on Extradition and the Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters", to be held in Ivory Coast during September 1997. The Institute has identified an expert to serve as a resource person for the seminar.

27. The Institute was represented in the team of the project on the international study on firearm regulation. The final report of the study[2] was submitted to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its sixth session.

28. The Institute is involved in a project on "Good Governance and Easing Social Tension in Uganda", involving the evaluation of the operation of local council courts. In addition, UNAFRI provided technical assistance to the Uganda national steering committee on the establishment of community service as an alternative to prison.

G. Conferences and seminars

29. The Institute participated in various international, regional and subregional and national meetings and seminars, as outlined below:

(a) The Institute was represented at the expert group meeting on gathering information on and analysis of firearm regulations held at Vienna from 10 to 14 February 1997, at which the report of the United Nations International study on firearm regulation was finalized. UNAFRI coordinated the work of the African national experts who participated in the study on behalf of their countries;

(b) The Director represented UNAFRI at the sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held at Vienna from 28 April to 9 May 1997, during which he participated in a special meeting of the representatives of the institutes comprising the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network. The statement by the representative of UNICRI on behalf of all institutes of the network drew the attention of the Commission to the financial plight of UNAFRI, which had been forced to reduce staff to a skeletal level (see para. 10 above). In addition, the Director established new contacts and explored prospective sources of support and cooperation for the Institute;

(c) The Eleventh Coordination Meeting of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network was held at Courmayeur, Italy, on 2 and 3 October 1996. The Director also participated in the General Assembly of the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council and in the subsequent seminar on "Migration and Crime", which was held by the Council at Courmayeur immediately after the coordination meeting;

(d) The Deputy Director represented the Institute at the International Training Workshop on Probation in Malta from 2 to 5 July 1997.

30. The Institute's staff participated as resource persons in a number of locally held seminars and workshops related to crime prevention and criminal justice, combating drugs and violent crime and the observance of human rights. At the same time, the Institute provided technical assistance and support to local initiatives with respect to organizing workshops and seminars.

III. Funding and support

A. Funding sources

31. During the reporting period, the Institute was funded by assessed contributions from member States, a grant from the United Nations and income generated by the rental of the Institute's premises.

1. Assessed financial contributions of member States

32. At present, the Institute has a membership of 28 African countries. As mentioned in the previous report, two other African countries indicated their interest in acceding to the statute of the Institute.

33. The effectiveness of the Institute in the area of crime prevention and control continues to be recognized by African Governments. Undoubtedly, member States are aware that the Institute must be funded by them, as they are its rightful owners. Nonetheless, by 31 July 1997, only two member States had paid their assessed contributions. Regrettably, the situation did not improve despite various appeals by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa as well as the Governing Board of the Institute, and by Uganda, as the host country.

34. Since the inception of the Institute assessed contributions had only been received from 12 out of 28 countries: one country had settled all its outstanding assessed contributions; another member State was in arrears for one year; and the 10 other countries had made partial payments varying from one to six years' contributions. Thus, the total collections of contributions received from member States since 1989 amounted to US$ 302,261.19. This is less than 15 per cent of the total assessed contributions of $2,024,216.00, for the period from 1989 to 1997, thus leaving $1,721,954.81 as an outstanding balance.

2. United Nations

35. For the 1992-1993 biennium, the General Assembly approved a grant of $204,800 to cover the salaries of the Director and Deputy Director and other administrative expenses of the Institute, which continued to be included in the regular budget of the United Nations in subsequent bienniums. As at 31 December 1996, $72,353.63 of the grant had been spent on approved items, leaving an unspent balance of $132,446.37 to cover the 1997 expenditure.

B. Resources available

36. Total funds available to the Institute at the beginning of 1997 included the 1997 balance of the United Nations grant plus saving from receipts from the previous collection of member States' assessed contributions, amounting to $61,950.00. Anticipated funds included member States' assessed contributions amounting to $66,050.00 and income from the rental of the Institute's premises, amounting to $22,000.00. As at 31 July 1997, the Institute had received $13,935.00 out of these anticipated funds.

37. Consequently, the Institute had available resources of $208,331.37 as at 31 July 1997. In addition to these resources, the United States Government had committed $280,000 to the Institute for 1997 to execute the project on African extradition laws and mutual assistance. As at 31 July 1997, the Institute had received $140,000 to carry out the research phase of the project, which included surveys in about 25 African countries.

C. Additional funding

38. It should be recalled that the General Assembly in its resolutions 50/147 and 51/61 had called for the continued provision of adequate funds to cover the expenses of core staff and the basic requirements for the implementation of the Institute's programmes and the strengthening of its capacity to support national mechanisms for crime prevention and criminal justice in African countries.

39. Overall resource requirements for 1997 are estimated at $328,249. Some of these funds will be utilized as follows: (a) organization of a bilingual workshop on the prevention of crime in urban areas: promoting meaningful action strategies ($71,000); (b) organization of a bilingual seminar on de-institutionalization and the promotion of necessary prison reform ($71,000); (c) implementation of the next phase of the African survey on crime, victimization and criminal justice administration, involving research to be conducted in five additional countries ($35,000); (d) continuation of the action-oriented study on the resettlement of street children in Uganda in other African countries ($35,000); (e) reinstatement of the three frozen core staff posts to enable the Institute to provide the mandated activities ($87,794).

IV. Governing Board

40. The fifth ordinary meeting of the Governing Board is to be held in October 1997. The Institute, in consultation with the Chairman of the Governing Board, has prepared a full review of its activities during 1997. The Institute has been operating on the basis of the decisions of the Board from its Fourth Ordinary Meeting. Project proposals continued to be prepared and submitted to funding agencies. The statutory audit of the 1994 and 1995 financial statements of the Institute was carried out during the reporting period. An audit certificate was issued by the Board of Auditors after the auditing.

V. Economic Commission for Africa

41. The Economic Commission for Africa, following the decision of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning, constituted a team of experts to carry out consultative missions to various ECA-sponsored institutions, including UNAFRI, to discuss the ECA recommendations based on the findings and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Ten to rationalize and harmonize the activities of those institutions. The experts visited the Institute from 16 to 20 February 1997.

42. In its report the mission emphasized that the Institute was a unique institution in Africa, that its existence was fully justified in terms of the needs assessment of member States and that its merits and continued existence as a regional Institute remained valid. The experts stressed that the continued existence of UNAFRI was further justified by its focus on human rights, criminal justice, the rehabilitation of offenders and the rule of law, issues that had become the priority concerns of all OAU member States. The mission stated, however, that the Institute lacked the human, material and financial resources to perform as a regional institution; its major constraint was the lack of funding. The Institute has to be maintained as a regional institute on a sound financial basis. The mission further recommended that UNAFRI: develop new revenue sources other than the assessed contributions from member States; intensify current activities while at the same time breaking new ground by developing and providing new types of services; develop consultancy services in training, research and advisory services which UNAFRI would offer to member States at a price. In addition, it was stressed that ECA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and African capacity-building foundations should support the Institute

by assisting it in developing a programme or service plan and the means to market it.

VI. Concluding remarks

43. The present report is the sixth in a series of reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. UNAFRI is a unique regional institution in Africa, which has continued to receive political support by African States and many of those African Governments that have not yet acceded to the statute. In addition, the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network have supported the Institute with a view to fostering regional cooperation and collaboration in crime prevention and criminal justice.

44. The Institute has maintained a structure for the execution of its mandated activities to service African countries. At the same time, it has further intensified its support for planned international cooperation and joint activities. Since its operationalization in 1991, the Institute has executed activities, in accordance with its approved programmes of work and budget and in response to requests by African Governments in training, research, reliable database and information delivery and advisory services. The latter have largely been made possible through the United Nations grant, the assistance provided by the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and contributions from member States.

45. The performance of the Institute has been recognized with satisfaction by its member States, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Economic Commission for Africa. In addition, UNAFRI has been commended by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for its efforts towards the promotion and coordination of regional activities related to crime prevention and criminal justice in Africa. The ECA consultative mission report as well as the declaration issued by the African Ministerial Workshop on Corruption and Organized Transnational Crime stressed the value and the merits of UNAFRI and its continued existence.

46. Since the inception of the Institute, the host Government has continued to support it to the extent possible, including through the provision of funds and in-kind donations, in addition to the timely remittance of its annual assessed contribution. Particularly in times of acute difficulty, this support was extremely important, and the Institute could not have survived without it.

47. In all six reports of the Secretary-General, it has been stressed that the primary responsibility for providing the Institute with adequate funds rests with the member States. However, despite the various appeals by different bodies and authorities, the outstanding balance of unpaid assessed contributions amounts to over 85 per cent of the expected collections.

48. High crime rates and malfunctioning criminal justice systems are detrimental to sustainable development, which aims at introducing democracy and economic reforms in Africa. Transnational criminal activities are on the rise in many African countries. Consequently, African Governments have to deal with a growing crime rate while in many cases they lack the institutional capacity and the human and financial resources to implement effective counteractive measures.

49. In these circumstances, the role of UNAFRI in assisting African countries in strengthening their capacity in crime prevention and criminal justice cannot be overemphasized. The Institute not only must step up its present activities, but must also break new ground to assist African Governments in dealing with these situations.

50. In its resolutions 50/147 and 51/61, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Institute was provided with adequate funds within the overall appropriation of the programme budget and from extrabudgetary resources. In pursuance of these repeated requests, the Secretary-General has proposed continuation of the grant at the 1996-1997 level for the 1998-1999 biennium under section 16 of his proposed programme budget for the coming biennium with a view to ensuring some degree of stability for the Institute. No doubt, the Institute will have to continue to explore new revenue sources to ensure its efficient and effective operation.

Notes

[1] E/1997/30.

[2] E/CN.15/1997/4 and Corr.1.

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Operational framework for the International Year of Older Persons, 1999

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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I. Introduction

1. A number of General Assembly resolutions and decisions support activities for the International Year of Older Persons. These include endorsement of the International Plan of Action on Ageing (resolution 37/51) and promulgation of the related target strategies for the year 2001 (resolution 47/86), adoption of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (resolution 46/91), designation of 1 October as the International Day for the Elderly (resolution 45/106), subsequently redesignated as the International Day of Older Persons (resolution 50/141) and designation of the Year itself (47/5).

2. At its substantive session of 1997, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1997/18 of 21 July 1997, entitled "International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages", based on a text recommended by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session,[1] and recommended its adoption to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

3. In its resolution 50/141 of 21 December 1995, the General Assembly promulgated a conceptual framework for the International Year of Older Persons, 1999, and requested the Secretary-General to report to at its fifty-second session on the preparations being made by Member States, United Nations organizations and bodies and non-governmental organizations for the observance of the Year. The present report has been prepared in response to that request. It also includes an operational framework for the Year and beyond to complement the conceptual framework.

4. Section II presents a brief account of activities; a comprehensive list will be included in the calendar of events being prepared for the Internet, with selected activities for distribution in hard copy. To assist countries in their preparations, the annex provides a menu of ideas for activities at the national level.

5. Section III provides a suggested structure for organizing activities in four areas: raising awareness: the society for all ages; looking ahead beyond 1999; reaching out, including to non-traditional actors; and improving networking, particularly in the areas of research and information exchange. These comprise the four dimensions of an operational framework and also incorporate the four facets of the conceptual framework.

II. Highlights of preparations for 1999

A. Key dates

6. The following schedule, based on mandates and current planning, provides dates around which to organize preparations:

(a) The International Year of Older Persons will be launched on the International Day of Older Persons 1 October 1998 (Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/18);

(b) Four plenary meetings of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in 1999, will be devoted to follow-up to the Year, which should take place at an appropriate global policy-making level (Council resolution 1997/18);

(c) In 2001, three assessments are planned: evaluation of the Year, evaluation of the target strategies adopted in 1992 and the fifth review and appraisal of the Plan of Action. All three events could be consolidated into an intensive evaluation of past strategies as the basis for a strategy to the year 2010 or 2020;

(d) At its thirty-sixth session, in 1998, the Commission for Social Development will review different options for the future review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, in preparation for the fifth review of the implementation of the Plan mandated to occur in 2001 (Commission for Social Development resolution 35/1);

(e) The Commission is also scheduled, at its thirty-sixth session, to examine the theme "Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons", in the context of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The examination could encompass the essential elements of the "society for all ages", the theme of the International Year of Older Persons;

(f) At its thirty-seventh session, in 1999, the Commission, in follow-up to the Summit, is scheduled to consider the theme "Social services for all", within the context of which it may wish to examine the changing mix of welfare provisions for frail older persons now emerging, with particular focus on how these affect the status of women, youth, younger workers, the well-being of families, and the changing roles and relationships of civil society, market and State.

B. Key players and selected activities

7. In its preparations for the International Year of Older Persons, the Commission for Social Development is being assisted by an ad hoc informal open-ended support group established by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1996/242 of 22 July 1996. At the time of writing, the support group has held an organizational and three substantive meetings (a fourth was scheduled for September 1997). Co-chaired by the representatives of the Dominican Republic and Spain, it has become a major forum for debate and a platform for governmental, non-governmental and expert reports on the Year.

8. Attendance at the first three meetings of the support group included the following: Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, Mexico, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the European Union.

9. By August 1997, nearly 50 national focal points had been established for the Year. Plans and activities are getting under way, as the following examples — China, Costa Rica, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom — illustrate.

10. China is planning a series of meetings and events, including on "Ageing: towards the twenty-first century" at Shanghai in 1997 and an international conference on lifelong learning and an international exhibition of products for older persons, in 1998; in 1999, China will organize training seminars in cooperation with the International Institute on Ageing of Malta (ILIA), co-sponsor an international workshop on ageing with the International Federation of Associations of the Elderly (FIAPA) and, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and bodies, is exploring the feasibility of convening an interregional symposium on family and community caregiving.

11. At the national level, China's preparations to date include the launching of a pilot housing programme for older persons in Beijing and the opening of a telephone hot line for older persons.

12. The Costa Rican Gerontological Association will organize a forum on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons and a National Week of Older Persons to prepare for the Year. It will launch an information campaign for the Year on the theme "Towards a society for all ages", supported by poster displays and media discussions. It will form a coalition of interested parties to elaborate a full programme for the Year, cooperating with the United Nations office in the country.

13. The Netherlands has a secretariat, budget, fund, programme and national committee for the Year, as well as 400 local committees. These are using established events and days to publicize the Year. A celebration of 45,000 participants is planned for 1 October 1999, expected to be Europe's largest event ever for older persons. The last longest day of the century (21 June in the Netherlands) will be marked with a 24-hour gathering of the generations.

14. Leading up to the Year, the Netherlands is organizing, in 1997, a National Brainstorming Day, a news service and two Internet sites: www.seniorweb.nl and www.1999.org. It is mounting three attitude-changing campaigns for the general public, the media and children on the theme "Images of the elderly". A 50-plus fair and a 1 October festival for 35,000 older persons is being arranged, and a free, 175-page *50-Plus Guide* is being published.

15. An elders parliament will be convened in 1998 to discuss issues with elected officials. In 1999, school projects, national postage stamps, film festivals, multimedia festivals via the Internet and master classes (with older persons teaching youth) and many other events will be held.

16. In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the non-governmental organization Age Concern has launched a two-year "millennium debate of the age", leading up to a massive conference at the end of 1999 when an "agenda for the age" will be finalized and presented to policy makers and society at large. The project has two interrelated dimensions: millennium papers and the debate of the age. Study groups have been drafting the millennium papers since 1996, producing contextual questions for the debate on five key areas. These are: paying for age, that is, the costs of an ageing society; ageing and the future of health and social care; the future of the built environment as society ages; future work and lifestyles in the new millennium, and values and attitudes in an ageing society.

17. The debate will include interactive meetings, radio, television and Internet discussions throughout the country and will aim to involve everyone: the general public, politicians, employers, academics, volunteers, health providers, designers and architects, the media, lawyers, trade unions, planners, and all government departments. It will reach out to different groups: the voluntary sector, social and health-care practitioners, professional and academic bodies, central and local government, industry and commerce, professionals, interested individuals, women's, youth and

older peoples' organizations, religious bodies, schools and colleges, cross-cultural and ethnic minority groups and many others.

18. The end objective is to achieve national consensus on an agenda for the age. Thus, the 1999 activities are helping to forge a long-term sustainable vision and action programme.

19. At the regional level, various entities have started activities for the Year. The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, in collaboration with the Latin American Parliament, and the Government of Uruguay held a two-day International Forum of the Americas on Population Ageing and Social Integration: For a Millennium without Discrimination of Age in Health Care, in July/August. The Forum assessed progress achieved in reaching the Global targets on ageing for the year 2001, and drafted proposals for regional observances of the Year to be presented to the presidents and heads of state at the Ibero-American Summit in 1998.

20. An intergovernmental Conference on Ageing Populations in the Mediterranean Region is being organized by the International Institute on Ageing in Malta in December 1997. The Institute's extensive training programme is supporting, *inter alia*, capacity-building in several regions. Its TWINAGE network has been established specifically to promote cooperation between developing and developed regions.

21. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will host a regional meeting for the Year in late 1998 or early 1999. It hopes to formulate a regional plan of action on ageing. It has recently issued a directory of national coordinating bodies on ageing and non-governmental organizations active in the field, as well as a compilation of international and regional mandates on ageing. It has published a report, *Lifelong Preparation for Old Age in Asia and the Pacific*, an annotated bibliography and programme issues in the field of ageing and two population studies on the topic.

22. Research and capacity-building will be the focus of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in the lead-up to 1999. The results of an ongoing comparative research programme on the social and economic conditions of older persons will be examined at a meeting in 1999, with the collaboration of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and others. Selected country reports on population ageing are being prepared for completion by 1999.

23. Within the European Union, the Year 1999 presents an opportunity to revive many of the innovations and good practices of the European Year of Older Persons and Solidarity between the Generations, 1993, possibly extending their scope into central and eastern Europe and other regions. Institution-building is being promoted in central and eastern Europe by a network being coordinated by the American Association of Retired Persons and HelpAge International.

24. Within the United Nations system, activities for the Year are being launched at an inter-agency meeting in August 1997. Items for exploration include collaboration through the Internet; maintaining a database of research, policies and programmes; issuing a conceptual papers series; preparing an information kit and devising a "2020 strategy". Separate and collective initiatives will be reported to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

25. Five global networks of non-governmental organizations are supporting initiatives for the Year. Two of these have been especially established for the Year — Coalition-99 and Creative Connections. Coalition-99 is a network of governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals concerned with exchanging information on preparations for the Year, established and facilitated by the American Association of Retired Persons.

26. Creative Connections is an initiative of the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee in New York. Many of its members have a wider focus than ageing. Committee members have alerted their national affiliates worldwide of the Year, encouraging them to get involved in preparations for the Year, and members have also given presentations on the Year to local groups as they have travelled around the world.

27. The International Association of Gerontology promotes the international agenda on ageing through regional associations and, most effectively, at its quadrennial world congresses which have included a United Nations component in recent years.

28. The biennial meetings of the International Federation on Ageing have come to serve as a platform for non-governmental debate and input to the United Nations programme on ageing. The meeting in Jerusalem in 1995 initiated preparations for the Year; the meeting in South Africa in November 1997 will reach out to the African continent. If funding is secured, the meeting in Montreal in 1999 will coincide with the publication of a global report on older persons and possibly a high-level meeting.

29. The International Federation of Associations of the Elderly has a worldwide network that is particularly active in French- and Spanish-speaking countries. It has established

"1999 liaison centres" on three continents and is devoting its eleventh international symposium, in Martinique in November 1997, to preparations for the Year.

30. These networks, close collaborators with the United Nations programme on ageing, criss-cross and span the world. They reach out beyond ageing constituencies to help make preparations for the Year all-inclusive.

C. Lead agency and supporters

31. The United Nations programme on ageing (in the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs) is serving as lead agency for the Year by adapting its ongoing activities and collaborating with interested parties.

32. Providing conceptual leadership and operational clarity is a continuing challenge to the programme, as interest and activities expand with the approach of the Year. For the programme to respond effectively to this expansion, it needs the support of interested parties. The Government of Germany has already expressed its intention to support the programme in addition to its extensive national effort, including setting up a commission, advisory group and focal point, preparing a postage stamp series, making recommendations on "a society for all ages", holding a national parliamentary assembly of older persons in the German Bundestag and many other regional, local and communal events.

33. In the coming months, with assistance from a variety of entities, the United Nations programme on ageing will, *inter alia*:

(a) Assist the General Assembly and the Commission for Social Development in their preparations for 1999 and the Commission's ad hoc informal open-ended support group;

(b) Maintain a calendar of events for the Year in hard copy and on the Internet, with technical support from the American Association of Retired Persons;

(c) Prepare a substantive information kit, with assistance from Age Concern and in collaboration with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat;

(d) Promote a debate on the society for all ages, initially at the sixteenth World Congress of Gerontology, in Adelaide, Australia, in August 1997, supported by the Government of Australia, the Government of South Australia and Asta Medica, and subsequently at an interregional meeting in 1998 and through a publication in 1999;

(e) Issue the third edition of the *World Ageing Situation* in 1997-1998, focusing on the four facets of the conceptual framework, with contributions from individual experts and from the International Social Security Association and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;

(f) Issue the *Bulletin on Ageing* (Nos. 2/3, 1997) focusing on multigenerational relationships, with the International Family Policy Forum serving as guest editor;

(g) Distribute the Countdown to 1999 newsletter, with the assistance of Coalition-99, which is also arranging for Countdown to be translated into French and Spanish;

(h) Compile and issue, in 1997, a directory of national infrastructures on ageing: basic elements, with the assistance of an intern from Denmark;

(i) Collaborate with the non-governmental committees on ageing in New York, Geneva and Vienna on a variety of initiatives;

(j) Establish a collaborative advisory centre on rural ageing at the University of West Virginia; support its expert group meeting in 1999 and international conference on rural ageing in 2000, as well as, with the cooperation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the preparation of a draft plan of action on rural ageing for the decade 2000-2010;

(k) Explore initiatives on urban ageing with interested parties;

(l) Establish a collaborative relationship with the American Association of Retired Persons in its efforts to create a comprehensive database of research, policies and programmes on ageing;

(m) Establish a collaborative relationship with the International Longevity Centre, which held the first of its series of meetings for the Year in June 1997 at United Nations Headquarters, co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations;

(n) Collaborate with other parties in preparing for the Year, including with Global Action on Ageing in reaching the grass roots; the New Humanity movement in defining "the society for all ages"; HelpAge International in developing initiatives in Asia and the Pacific; and the International Council for Caring Communities in convening, at United Nations Headquarters in April 1998, a meeting on the impact of the longevity factor on cities;

(o) Explore with the International Federation on Ageing, the feasibility of producing, through multisectoral collaboration, a report, in the style of reports of the United Nations Children's Fund, on the state of the world's older persons, in 1999.

III. Operational framework for 1999 and beyond

34. The operational framework is designed to facilitate mainstreaming and encourage activities within a long-term perspective. Its specific objectives are the following:

(a) To raise awareness, focusing on the society for all ages, the Year's theme;

(b) To encourage looking ahead, beyond 1999, identifying a vision, priorities and essential processes for the long term;

(c) To reach out to non-traditional actors such as the development community, the media, the private sector and youth;

(d) To improve networking so as to achieve greater consistency and comparability of data and research, and better collaboration among the major global networks that now span every continent.

A. Raising awareness: the society for all ages

35. The theme for 1999, "Towards a society for all ages", has been adopted by several countries and organizations. It lends itself to a broad exploration of the situation of older persons while promoting the ideal of a society that accommodates itself to all.

36. The society for all ages emerged from the concept of a society for all. As noted in the conceptual framework (A/50/114):

> "... we may think of a society for all as one that adjusts its structures and functioning, as well as its policies and plans, to the needs and capabilities of all, thereby releasing the potential of all, for the benefit of all. A 'society for all ages' would, additionally, enable the generations to invest in one another and share in the fruits of that investment, guided by the twin principles of reciprocity and equity" (para. 38).

37. There are several ways of conceptualizing a "society for all ages". An explanation of the concept is to be launched at the sixteenth World Congress of Gerontology and will be continued in the *World Ageing Situation 1997-1998*. Throughout 1998-1999, the issue will be debated and monitored by the support group of the Commission for Social Development. The programme on ageing will host an interregional conference on the topic in 1998, and issue a related publication in 1999.

38. A preliminary exposition is given below, using the four facets of the conceptual framework: (a) the situation of older persons; (b) lifelong individual development; (c) multigenerational relationships, and (d) the interplay of population ageing and development.

39. Guidelines for improving the situation of older persons are well developed and include: (a) the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, listing 18 principles in the areas of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity, whose promotion is the overall objective of the Year; (b) the International Plan of Action on Ageing, whose 62 recommendations for action lay the broad foundations for activities on ageing, focusing, *inter alia*, on education, employment and income security, housing and the environment, health and hygiene, social welfare and the family; and (c) general comment No. 6 (1995), on the economic, social and cultural rights of older persons, adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 24 November 1995.[2]

40. The general comment draws the attention of Member States to the situation of older persons who, unlike women or children, have no comprehensive international convention addressing their rights. The comment will guide States parties to better understand their obligations to older persons when implementing the various provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.[3] Though the Covenant does not contain any explicit reference to the rights of older persons, it implicitly recognizes the right to old-age benefits through article 9, which deals with the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.

41. The Plan, Principles and general comment provide a broad framework for action on ageing, and draw attention to specific groups that have tended to be excluded from mainstream socio-economic development, such as older women, migrants, refugees, indigenous elders and the "oldest old".

42. Among the many dimensions of "the situation of older persons", two are emerging to pre-eminence — active ageing and caregiving strategies. The terms "active" or "productive" ageing are currently used in two ways: first, to describe, and thereby to support, the importance of the many socially and economically productive roles open to ageing individuals

in developing countries and, secondly, as an attempt to reverse the phenomenon in developed countries whereby retirement from the formal economic sector automatically negates the formal acknowledgment of the unpaid productive roles of many older persons.

43. The promotion of active ageing in developing countries needs technical and financial international support. Developing countries identified income-generating projects for older persons as their foremost need in the fourth world survey on ageing, 1996.[4] To date, such assistance has been limited, carried out mainly through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing, and has fallen off to almost nothing in the 1990s. In the role of project design and implementation, consistent support has been provided by HelpAge International in assisting groups of older persons or organizations of older persons to become economically self-reliant. Current initiatives include, among others, the provision of solar tents for agriculture in Bolivia, transmission of traditional skills in Jamaica, and income-generating mills for returnees in Mozambique.

44. Opportunities for active ageing in developed economies have been increasing. At the initiative of Japan, the group of eight industrialized countries, in their Denver communique of 22 June 1997, recognized it as the desire and ability of many older people to continue work or other socially productive activities well into their later years. They agreed that old stereotypes of seniors as dependent should be abandoned, and they discussed how to promote the active ageing of their older citizens with due regard to their individual choices and circumstances, including removing disincentives to labour force participation and lowering barriers to flexible and part-time employment that exist in some countries. The group touched on the transition from work to retirement, lifelong learning and ways to encourage voluntarism and to support family caregiving.

45. A convergence of approaches to ageing in developing and developed countries, under the concept of productive or active ageing, is evident. In this regard, the United Nations programme on ageing is exploring the possibility of convening an expert meeting on expanding older workers' options. Such options include gradual retirement, part-time work and the creation of "initiative centres" in local communities that would provide basic supports (tools, marketing advice, etc.) for a variety of mid-life and elder enterprises.

46. However, in promoting active ageing, a cautious route must be forged between the two extremes of exclusionary "ageism" and an activism that might unintentionally lead to too much demand on older persons.

47. Attention to the development of appropriate caregiving strategies is another priority. As women enter the labour market in greater numbers and the number of the oldest old increases, the supply of informal caregivers will decline, even as the likely demand for caregiving will increase. At the same time, Governments in all areas of the world tend to prefer home care for frail elderly over institutional care, for both humanitarian and financial reasons. Thus, a tension is developing between two distinct policy objectives: promoting equal opportunities in the labour market for women on the one hand, while on the other, actively promoting the role of the family in caregiving.

48. To clarify these apparently conflicting trends, and to develop policy guidelines for caregiving strategies in the next decade, two meetings are planned. In November 1997, the programme on ageing is convening an expert group meeting at the International Institute on Ageing in Malta, in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, Alzheimers Association USA and Pfizer Inc. The National Committee on Ageing of China is exploring the feasibility of hosting, in cooperation with several United Nations entities, a related interregional symposium on family and community caregiving in 1999 in China.

49. Simultaneously, many initiatives at the local and national levels are getting under way. One of these is client-centred caregiving in small housing units being promoted by the Salmon Group. The Group came into being after the European Year of Older Persons and Solidarity between the Generations, in 1993, and has extended its activities into eastern Europe. As a contribution to the Year 1999, it is seeking partnerships worldwide in establishing a network and debate on small-scale client-centred care innovations.

50. A recent decision of the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat to disaggregate population data for ages 80 and over by age groups 80-84, 85-89, 90-94, 95-99 and 100 and over in future demographic projections and in the year 2000 round of censuses will provide much-needed information on the oldest old or the "fourth age".

51. Women live longer than men by several years in most countries. They often have fewer resources and more of the health problems associated with advanced age. Thus, income security and health-care strategies for women need to be given priority. At the same time, more research is needed into the biomedical, social and cultural causes of the significant gap in life expectancy between women and men.

52. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-first session, recommended that the preparations for the Year include a gender perspective and decided to address the status of older women and the violation of their rights, at its

forty-second session, and the differential impact of population ageing on men and women, at its forty-third session. It invited other United Nations entities to examine the status of older women, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women.[5]

53. Lifelong individual development, the second approach in exploring the society for all ages, is a relatively new priority within the United Nations programme on ageing. It is based on the simple idea that both individual behaviour and national policy, which affect people at different ages, but especially the young, will shape the situation of people in older age. New interest in the question is partly a response to the rapidity of population ageing in developing countries — a process that will take many only 15 to 30 years, as opposed to the 50 to 100 years it took developed countries in the past. Today's youth, therefore, are an important target group; they need to acquire new knowledge, skills and behaviours if they are to reach their own later years enjoying good health and income security with supportive family and social networks.

54. Youth need information about the long-term impact of the so-called "affluent lifestyles" of smoking, drinking, "junk food", stress and pollution. These lifestyles are taking root in developing countries, according to the *World Health Report 1997*, leading to a rapid increase in chronic diseases that can be prevented but seldom cured. Unhealthy lifestyles in youth and middle age can result in an extended period of debility in later years, with a consequent heavy caregiving burden on families and societies.

55. Youth also need to know that traditional systems of support and social security are changing — perhaps weakening — including family and community networks, especially in developing countries. At the same time there is an erosion of state welfare services in developed economies. Developing the habit of saving over one's entire working life is important, as urged by the World Bank in its 1994 publication *Averting the Old Age Crisis*. Policy frameworks that support savings, access to pensions and provision of social security are explored in the 1996 ESCAP publication *Lifelong Preparation for Old Age in Asia and the Pacific*.

56. Childhood, too, has a particular relationship with later years and has been called "the cradle of longevity". It is now known that "emotional intelligence" is acquired in childhood, together with the imprints of co-dependence, independence and interdependence — "know-how" that facilitates family life, self-reliance and collaboration throughout the life course. Many see a natural bond of affection between children and elders, and the latter have been trained, in places, to be "grandparents by choice" for emotionally deprived children.

57. The ability of individuals to make an early adjustment to longevity will be influenced by their perceptions of old age and by societal attitudes. If old age is accorded meaning and purpose for individual and societal development, it can be approached with interest and confidence and could help shape a kinder, gentler civilization of benefit to all, and of necessity for a time fast approaching when every third individual will be over age 60.

58. With longer life expectancy, mid-life becomes an ever more important phase of life. It could be used for adults to review their past and future life achievements and possibilities, and make the appropriate adjustments in their lives, both in terms of lifestyle and livelihood skills in order to remain active members of society in their now-extended later years.

59. At present, particularly in industrialized countries, the demands of work and family life compete for time and attention of working adults, while those in retirement tend to have abundant free time but fewer responsibilities or calls on that time. Societies as well as individuals would gain by a more even distribution of time spent in education, work, leisure and discharge of family tasks throughout the lifespan.

60. These and other aspects of individual lifelong development will be explored at forthcoming meetings, including an international symposium on restructuring work and the life course, being organized by the University of Toronto and the University of Bremen at Toronto from 7 to 9 May 1998; the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, at Lisbon from 8 to 12 August 1998; and the International Development Conference, in Washington, D.C., in 1999.

61. A consideration of multigenerational relationships provides a third approach to the society for all ages. It hinges on the concept of "interdependence" and how this can be maintained in family and society as the proportions of old and young change. The emergence of the "inverse pyramid" family is a good illustration of this change. Where once there was a pyramid of many children and increasingly fewer adults and older persons, now the inverse pyramid family is possible, consisting of one child, two parents, four grandparents and, possibly, eight great-grandparents.

62. The practical implications of individual and population ageing for the family rest mainly in caregiving and, for society, in the provision of social services and income security. These two dimensions have innumerable issues to be explored — such as active ageing and an appropriate caregiving mix, as discussed earlier. But the subject is broader still.

63. A concept of multigenerational citizenship is again being discussed, one that invites each generation to shape the public world, seeing it as a continuum that existed before their birth and will remain after their death. Legacies to future generations are a collective responsibility of today's citizens — be this the legacy of natural capital (the environment), physical capital (infrastructure, plant and equipment), financial capital (savings), social capital (institutions and structures) and cultural capital (the values, principles and concepts that are handed down).

64. The *Bulletin on Ageing* (Nos. 2 and 3, 1997) will examine multigenerational relationships from several perspectives: equity, exchanges, caregiving and the particularities of gender, indigenous cultures and migrants. The International Family Policy Forum is guest editing the *Bulletin* and is seeking support for establishing a worldwide inventory of multigenerational initiatives, with expert analysis and commentary, as a major contribution to the Year 1999.

65. The Committee for Development Planning will consider intergenerational transfers and social security at its thirty-second session, in May 1998.

66. Considering the ageing process in its totality (ageing and development: the fourth approach to the society for all ages) requires, according to the International Plan of Action on Ageing, "an integrated approach within the framework of overall economic and social planning. Undue emphasis on specific sectoral problems would constitute a serious obstacle to the integration of ageing policies and programmes into the broader development framework".[6]

67. An integrated approach, as recommended in the Plan, has proceeded more slowly than separate sectoral approaches to ageing (health, housing, etc.). The lifelong approach has only just entered the debate. Macro-level concerns have been mainly in terms of social security costs, usually calculated in terms of rising old-age dependency ratios.

68. The rising dependency ratio of older persons is, in itself, only one of many factors that can influence a nation's capacity to provide income security to its elderly while ensuring economic growth. A broad and more integrated approach would introduce several other factors, including, *inter alia*:

(a) The capabilities of cohorts over age 50 and their opportunities to continue working, including on a part-time basis;

(b) The rates of unemployment and of female employment and the age of entry into the workforce, all affecting overall dependency ratios that, in turn, affect national income and disbursements;

(c) Application of new technologies, which can increase individual productivity as well as national revenues;

(d) Population policies, which could, for example, aim to increase the infant population through pro-natal policies, or the adult population through pro-immigration policies;

(e) Investing internationally in youthful countries, which could simultaneously generate jobs for youth and income for pensioners;

(f) Military spending, and the extent to which spending on "external security" can be translated into spending on "social security".

69. Population ageing also prompts a change in production and consumption patterns, savings and investments, and underscores the need for universal design — an environment that facilitates movement by older persons who may, at times, have difficulties with activities of daily living.

70. Strategies need to be developed to support this integrative approach. These would include integrating ageing into follow-up activities to the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s (on social development, population, women and housing). Progress in this area would meet with global target No. 2 set for the year 2001, which aims to generate support for integrating ageing into national and international development plans and programmes (see A/47/339, sect. III).

B. Looking ahead: beyond 1999

71. According to current projections, in 2030 every third person in the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development will be over age 60. The picture is different for developing countries, where it is the speed of population ageing that catches the eye. It is estimated that it will take Tunisia 15 years for the cohort aged 65 and over to increase from 7 to 14 per cent (2020-2035); it will take Chile 30 years (2000-2030) to undergo a similar transition. By contrast, it took France 115 years

(1865-1980), allowing ample time for adjusting to the socio-economic consequences.

72. In the decades ahead, two important trends will be the speed of ageing in developing countries and the high proportion of older persons in developed countries. Since population trends are foreseeable over long periods, and major changes in population structure have profound implications on many aspects of society, the feasibility of formulating a long-term perspective plan to the year 2020 is being explored. Related national initiatives reported during the General Assembly's plenary observances of the Year will contribute to the preparation of a 2020 strategy, including, possibly, the "agenda of the age" (see paras. 16-18 above).

73. As reported by a Prime Ministerial Task Force on Positive Ageing in New Zealand, there are two possible approaches to preparing long-term perspective plans on ageing. The first was to see older people (however defined) as a distinct group in society and to try to develop ways of improving their experience. The second was to try to improve the experiences of people generally, while at the same time dismantling the barriers that segregate older people from the rest of society. Noting that the two approaches would require different strategies, the Task Force opted for the second approach and is focusing on a few long-term foundational goals and strategies, rather than on a multitude of short-term measures.

74. At the present time, the United Nations programme on ageing is endeavouring to integrate both approaches in its immediate and long-term plans, that is, addressing older persons as a distinct group in society while simultaneously seeking to dismantle the barriers that segregate older people from the rest of society. Both approaches will be taken into account in the evaluation of the Year of Older Persons, the fifth review and appraisal of the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, to be conducted by the Commission for Social Development in 2001, and the target strategies adopted in 1992 for the year 2001.

75. Various international initiatives now under way could also contribute to the 2020 perspective plan, including the drafting of a declaration of interdependence on multigenerational relationships, the development of a research agenda on ageing for the twenty-first century and the preparation of an international plan of action on rural ageing for the first decade of the twenty-first century, among others.

C. Reaching out: non-traditional actors

76. The General Assembly, in its Proclamation on Ageing (resolution 47/5, annex), designated 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons, and urged the international community to reach out to the development community, the media and the private sector. It also pointed out the need to reach younger generations.

77. The Proclamation encouraged donor and recipient countries to include older persons in their development programmes. Progress in this regard awaits the decision of country partners of the United Nations Development Programme to make older persons a target group in their development programmes.

78. Though older persons are not specifically excluded, they tend to be invisible on the international development agenda. HelpAge International has been working to reverse this situation, reaching out to Governments, United Nations agencies and bodies, and funds worldwide. Currently, for example, it is organizing a seminar to develop policies for older people in Thailand, Myanmar, Viet Nam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and China (Mekong Basin regions) in cooperation with ESCAP, with funding from the Government of Canada. Assisted by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Development Fund, it has established a revolving loan scheme for older persons in Sri Lanka.

79. In the Proclamation, the press and the media were encouraged to play a central role in the creation of awareness of population ageing and related issues. The media are uniquely placed to reach all levels of the community to raise awareness, generate debate and disseminate information on innovations and good practices. It could also help to counter ageist language and behaviour and expose the underlying reasons for "ageism", or age-prejudice, wherever it exists and the values that perpetuate it.

80. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat is working closely with the United Nations programme on ageing to develop a multimedia information campaign for the Year. The campaign will mobilize the Department's radio, television, print, public outreach and promotional activities as well as its worldwide network of information centres.

81. The Department is coordinating joint information activities with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes through the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), having held preliminary discussions in July 1997. The Department has also begun discussions

with some key non-governmental and corporate sponsors on jointly funded activities to promote the Year.

82. The activities and materials of the Department's campaign will be targeted, in several languages, at key redisseminators such as the media, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, educational institutions and business organizations at the international and national levels. Information about these activities will be accessible electronically through the United nations home page on the Internet.

83. The Department is exploring the feasibility of organizing an exhibit on a society for all ages that could, *inter alia*, incorporate elements of a worldwide poster competition being launched jointly by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the American Association of Retired Persons.

84. Complementing these initiatives, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service will launch a radio "initiative on age" in October 1998. The initiative could reach as many as 140 million listeners worldwide in English and several of the other 44 languages of the Service. It will explore the implications of individual and population ageing, featuring the voices and views of older people and of younger generations whose attitudes towards older persons and their own old age will be explored.

85. Regarding the private sector, the Proclamation on Ageing urged the international community to support broad and practical partnerships within the United Nations programme on ageing, including partnerships between United Nations bodies and the private sector.

86. Recommendation No. 18 of the International Plan of Action on Ageing covers the steps Governments are advised to take for the protection of elderly consumers, including by ensuring that food, products and equipment conform to standards, that safe use is made of medications, household chemicals, etc., that medicines and prosthetics are available, and that intensive promotion aimed at exploiting the meagre resources of the elderly be restrained.

87. Staying within the guidelines of recommendation 18, the programme on ageing is engaging businesses in a dialogue on ageing — to gain their support for flexible work scheduling, gradual retirement, retraining of older workers and, in a more general way, their support for disseminating awareness of the impact of individual and population ageing. Private sector support has been identified for a meeting on caregiving and gender to be convened at the International Institute on Ageing in Malta in November 1997.

88. Finally, youth have also become an important target group. The Proclamation urged, in the context of national initiatives, that the entire population be engaged in preparing for the later stages of life and old and young generations cooperate in creating a balance between tradition and innovation in economic, social and cultural development.

D. Networking: research and information exchange

89. The objective is to facilitate collaboration across nations and sectors, and to improve the relationship of research to policy formulation. Both objectives are rooted in the 1992 global targets (A/47/339) endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/86.

90. The programme on ageing is seeking to improve collaboration, which is the focus of global targets 6, 7 and 8, by expanding its Internet page for 1999, and connecting it with other related sites. This would benefit many national focal points and national committees for 1999, United Nations country offices and the five global non-governmental networks mentioned above (see paras. 25-30).

91. The Internet could also help to establish closer links between the United Nations and, for example, the Geneva International Network on Ageing (GINA), Generations United, the Universities of the Third Age, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and many others that have the potential to contribute to the United Nations programme on ageing.

92. To move towards global target No. 4, which aims to improve cross-national research on ageing, including harmonization of terminology and methodology, the programme is consulting with the American Association of Retired Persons in order to establish and maintain a database of research, policies and programmes. It is exploring with the International Association of Gerontology and other interested parties, including Governments and the private sector, the feasibility of convening a meeting on research priorities for the twenty-first century, particularly on how better to relate research to policy needs.

93. If developing countries are to react effectively and in time to the ageing of their populations, a new research agenda is needed, one that works within the resource limitations of countries but provides the essential information for a rapid policy response.

IV. Recommendations

94. To achieve the broad objectives of the operational and conceptual frameworks for the Year, that is, a society for all ages, several strategic measures are needed. It is therefore recommended that:

(a) Research, policies and programmes address, in particular, two areas of the situation of older persons: (i) active ageing, meaning opportunities for older persons to continue to participate in the socio-economic and cultural life of their societies, and (ii) an appropriate caregiving mix for frail older persons, encompassing family, community and institutional care systems that distribute tasks equitably among State, community, family and the primary caregiver;

(b) The international community of experts, practitioners and policy makers develop clear guidelines supporting lifelong individual development, with longevity in mind; multigenerational relationships, with changing family and societal population structures in mind; and the integration of ageing into government policies, which may involve multisectoral policy adjustments;

(c) On the basis of the above and other explorations, the General Assembly consider adopting, in 1999, a short consensus text on the society for all ages to underscore the lifelong and society-wide dimensions of individual and population ageing;

(d) Governments, non-governmental organizations, foundations and the private sector support the efforts of the United Nations programme on ageing, as the lead agency for 1999, to catalyse a debate, reach out to non-traditional actors, including youth, and provide core services for information exchange and research coordination;

(e) All concerned give priority to activities at the national and local levels, improve regional collaboration and explore opportunities for "twinning" between countries, cities and institutions on well-defined projects.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 6* (E/1997/26), chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution I.

[2] Ibid., *1996, Supplement No. 2* (E/1996/22), annex IV.

[3] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[4] E/CN.5/1997/4, para. 79.

[5] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 7* (E/1997/27), chap. I, sect. C, resolution 41/2.

[6] *Report of the World Assembly on Ageing, Vienna, 26 July-6 August 1982* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16), chap. VI, sect. A, para. 49.

ANNEX

Menu of ideas for activities at the national level

Core structures

1. Appoint a 1999 lead agency or focal point (i.e., an agency or individual to act as information source, and/or convene an exploratory meeting to set up the 1999 committee of all interested parties).

2. Establish a 1999 committee (large membership):

Members could include *traditional actors* — government ministries, organizations of older persons, gerontological institutes, etc. and *non-traditional actors* — the media, youth organizations, schools and universities, development agencies and environmental groups, foundations, women's and indigenous organizations, religious, professional and business entities.

(*Note*: Many national affiliates of international federations are already making preparations for the Year and could be valuable assets for 1999 committees.)

3. Prepare a 1999 programme, with promotional and developmental elements (listed below), as well as outreach to local areas and international contacts.

4. Establish a secretariat and budget. Retired persons could form or augment a core secretariat.

5. Establish a fund.

Promotional measures for 1999

1. Declare, for national observance, the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages.

2. Declare, for national observance, 1 October, the International Day of Older Persons.

3. Adopt, translate and distribute the United Nations Principles for Older Persons .

4. Establish a national calendar and data bank of initiatives to assist information exchange and collaboration.

5. Invite citizens (mayors, community leaders, writers, homemakers, caregivers, etc.) to give their views on a society for all ages or on old age in a new age.

6. Organize media debates on lifelong individual development or on changing multigenerational relationships in family and society.

7. Organize national fairs, with display booths for government ministries, non-governmental organizations, foundations, enterprises, etc.

8. Engage the academic community in the exploration of the principles and practices of an age-integrated society (i.e., a society for all ages).

9. Get ideas from national reports on other International Years, such as of the Family (1994) or for the Eradication of Poverty (1996).

10. Celebrate older persons and ageing on other days, for example on international days for health, women, volunteering.

11. Organize national conferences on selected priorities, which might include, for example:

(a) Multigenerational relationships in family and society: interdependence (measures of independence and dependence);

(b) Flexible work and retirement: part-time work, second careers, worker-caregiver conflicts, etc.;

(c) Caregiving structures, new and sustainable partnerships: home care, long-term care systems, insurance, gender issues;

(d) Rural ageing and development: community enterprises, appropriate technologies, etc.;

(e) Cities for all ages: innovations in living arrangements, services, etc.;

(f) Technologies for all ages: new tools for work and living, agri-tools for elders, etc.;

(g) Towards a society for all ages: adjusting infrastructure; adjusting perceptions;

(h) Lifelong individual development: the content and the context of lives are changing;

(i) Old age in a new age: scenarios for 2000, 2020 and 2050.

Developmental measures for 1999 and beyond

1. Consult the Short Guide for Setting National Targets on Ageing.[a]

2. For long-term issues and priorities, contact the National Coordinating Mechanism on Ageing.[a]

3. Integrate long-term issues and priorities into 1999 preparations — late-life labour, flexible retirement, caregiving strategies, youth perspectives on longevity, multigenerational exchanges, etc.

4. Devise future scenarios for the year 2020.

Reaching the local areas

Thirty-eight suggestions are given in the "Local agenda on ageing for the 1990s",[a] encompassing neighbourhoods, families and individuals; the business sector; schools and colleges; and the media.

Reaching out internationally

1. Participate in the United Nations calendar-1999 to facilitate an exchange of experiences.

2. Consider preparing a comprehensive national report on 1999 and beyond for international distribution.

3. Twin with other countries (cities, universities), particularly north-south and east-west.

4. Host and/or participate in international studies, events or conferences.

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[a] Available from the United Nations programme on ageing.

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Item 97 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Macroeconomic policy questions: trade and development

Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries

Note by the Secretary-General

1. By resolution 50/97 of 20 December 1995, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to prepare a report on the implementation of that resolution and submit it to the Trade and Development Board and to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

2. Pursuant to that request, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the above-mentioned report (see annex).

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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Annex

Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries

Progress report of the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 15 of its resolution 50/97 of 20 December 1995, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), to prepare a report on the implementation of that resolution and submit it to the Trade and Development Board and to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

2. In paragraph 9 of the same resolution, the Assembly took note of the report of the Second Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, held in New York from 19 to 22 June 1995,[1] and endorsed the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community contained therein. In paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene in 1997 another meeting of governmental experts from landlocked and transit developing countries and representatives of donor countries and financial and development institutions, including relevant regional and subregional economic organizations and commissions, to review progress in the development of transit systems in the landlocked and transit developing countries, with a view to exploring the possibility of formulating specific action-oriented measures. The Third Meeting was convened under the auspices of UNCTAD at United Nations Headquarters, from 18 to 20 June 1997. The conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting, are contained in section II of the present report.[2]

3. In paragraph 13 of the same resolution, the Assembly noted with appreciation the contribution of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in formulating international measures to deal with the special problems of the landlocked developing countries, and urged the Conference, *inter alia*, to keep under constant review the evolution of transit transport infrastructure facilities, institutions and services, monitor the implementation of agreed measures, collaborate in all relevant initiatives, including those of the private sector and non-governmental organizations, and serve as a focal point on cross-regional issues of interest to landlocked developing countries. In paragraph 14 of the resolution, the Assembly invited the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, to take appropriate measures for the effective implementation of the activities called for in the resolution. The recent activities of UNCTAD on behalf of landlocked developing countries in this regard are highlighted in section III of the present report.

4. In paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Assembly invited landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours to intensify further their cooperative arrangements, and in paragraph 7, it invited donor countries and multilateral and development institutions to provide those countries with appropriate financial and technical assistance. Accordingly, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD requested the countries and institutions concerned to provide him with information on the actions they had taken in that regard. This information is summarized in section IV of the present report.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

5. There is a fundamental change under way in the orientation of both landlocked and transit countries, as well as in the donor community, in addressing the transit problem. The challenges of this new orientation will have to be met with a much greater sense of priority and innovation, as reflected in the conclusions and recommendations briefly elaborated below.

A. Transit transport policy framework

6. The establishment of a commercially conducive transit policy environment remains at the centre of all efforts to further improve transit transport systems. Governments in landlocked and transit countries should reinforce the measures they have already taken to commercialize public sector enterprises dealing with transit transport matters.

7. Existing arrangements to coordinate all activities of public and private actors in both landlocked countries and transit countries should be strengthened and institutionalized, both at the national and subregional levels.

8. High transit transport costs remain the major barrier, and they erode the competitive edge of landlocked developing countries in world trade. A large proportion of their total export and import earnings from trade in goods and services goes to transportation and insurance payments. The international community, therefore, should seek ways to reduce high transport costs by establishing a stable transit framework, mutually agreed between landlocked and coastal countries, which reduces various bottlenecks, transit costs and logistical distortions. More transparency in transport markets is also very important.

B. Sectoral considerations

9. *Rail traffic.* In recent years, greater attention has been given to rehabilitating the rail network and to purchasing additional rolling stock and equipment in the various regions and subregions. The priority in the coming years will, however, be to support maintenance programmes and continue rehabilitation. The development of missing railway links, where proven economically viable, should be encouraged. The other key area in improving railway performance is management. The current measures being taken to give greater autonomy to railway management should be stepped up. Other measures to be pursued more aggressively include gearing railways to commercial operations and involving the private sector in some of the activities. Recent efforts to encourage competition with other modes of transport and the commercialization of some railway services should also be pursued.

10. *Road transit.* Efforts being made towards road maintenance, rehabilitation, upgrading and construction should continue. The maintenance problem will, however, not be resolved unless users adhere to regulations related to axle-load limits and motor vehicle dimensions. Governments should build up the capacity to enforce these regulations, as well as road safety regulations. Furthermore, the trend towards liberalization of road transit services should be further supported by allowing road hauliers to compete freely with railways.

11. *Port facilities and services.* The maintenance of port infrastructure and equipment remains an important item in future action by Governments. With regard to operational and management aspects, Governments should continue institutional reforms to make ports more market-oriented, by means of commercialization and gradual privatization. In order to ensure the speedy and cost-effective movement of cargo to inland destinations in landlocked countries, the establishment of dry ports in these countries should continue to be vigorously promoted and supported.

12. *Inland waterways.* The improvement of the current poor lake and river infrastructural facilities should be accorded high priority, particularly where such transit corridors constitute a vital outlet.

13. *Pipelines.* For a number of landlocked and transit countries, the movement of strategic commodities through pipelines is important. Agreements have been concluded to establish new pipelines in certain regions. The construction, improvement and maintenance of these facilities, and security measures for them, should be given high priority.

14. *Air freight.* Ongoing efforts to bolster air freight pooling arrangements should be further reinforced. This will greatly contribute to solving the problem of directional imbalance in freight flows and low levels of traffic and thus enhance the competitiveness of countries. Improvement of physical ground facilities, particularly with regard to freight collection, storage and distribution systems, should also be stepped up. Furthermore, ongoing efforts to liberalize policies regarding the granting of traffic rights for freight on scheduled services should be continued.

15. *Communications and information technology.* The Meeting took note of the recommendations formulated by the Expert Meeting on the Use of Information Technologies to Make Transit Arrangements More Effective.[3] The computerization of information regarding port and road transit operations and the passage of goods should also be further enhanced. The use of information technology, such as that provided by the Advanced Cargo Information System (ACIS) and Automated System of Customs Data Entry, Control and Management (ASYCUDA) programmes, should be increased, particularly with regard to the exchange of information. This will enable ports, transport operators and Governments to use the existing infrastructural and transport capacities more efficiently, reduce delays and lower costs. The required transit and customs management electronic data interchange (EDI) messages should be developed using the United Nations Rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (EDIFACT). Successful application of this technology, however, generally requires determined reform efforts on the part of benefiting countries.

16. *Transit insurance.* The consumers of transit insurance cover, namely shippers' councils, chambers of commerce and manufacturers' associations, should liaise with insurance institutions dealing with transit cargo in order to promote warehouse-to-warehouse insurance arrangements so as to reduce transit insurance premiums.

17. *Management and training.* Diversified training programmes, including workshops, seminars, on-the-job training and longer courses for managers and middle-level and lower-level operators in ports, on railways, in the road haulage industry, in air freight and in freight and clearing forwarding, should be strongly supported. An expanded private sector involvement in all of those areas should help to create a better environment that would achieve greater efficiency in business operations.

C. Bilateral, subregional and international legal frameworks

18. Most of the landlocked and transit developing countries have promoted a range of bilateral and subregional transit agreements and arrangements with regard to road, rail, inland waterway and air transport. The implementation of those agreements and arrangements varies among subregions but, in general, experience has shown that their monitoring and enforcement is not always adequate. Current efforts to strengthen mechanisms for a more effective implementation of the agreements and arrangements should be further reinforced. There has generally been slow progress made in adherence to international legal transit instruments. Efforts should be made by the promoters of these conventions to shed more light on the implications of adhering to them, as well as on the benefits that they would bring to the landlocked and transit developing countries.

19. In particular, Governments should be encouraged to simplify, modernize and harmonize their customs procedures, which would improve their effectiveness and facilitate transport and trade.

20. The Meeting welcomed the outcome of the Ulaanbaatar consultative subregional meeting of China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation, which, *inter alia*, called for the elaboration of a North-East Asia subregional transit agreement.

D. Future orientation of international support measures

21. The support provided by the donor community in recent years has significantly helped to address acute constraints in transit transport, particularly with regard to transit transport infrastructure. The continued enhancement of transport infrastructure has promoted trade activity between landlocked and transit developing countries. The limited capacity of the landlocked and transit countries to maintain and develop infrastructural facilities calls for further donor assistance in this area, which should include the continued provision of equipment in the various areas of the transit transport sector. There are, however, a range of policy and operational measures that also need the support of the donor community. In this regard, donors should consider extending their future assistance in such areas as: (a) supporting intercountry projects that enhance subregional trade; (b) promoting institutional and policy reforms that encourage market-oriented transit transport operations; (c) promoting commercialization and privatization programmes in the transit transport sector; (d) involvement in trilateral arrangements among landlocked and transit countries and their development partners in programmes that promote transit transport cooperation; and (e) supporting the development and implementation of computerized transit monitoring systems on the basis of the existing ASYCUDA and ACIS modules.

E. Institutional follow-up mechanisms

22. In view of the important role that subregional organizations will be playing in the future in promoting the effective implementation of subregional transit transport cooperative arrangements, donors and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are invited to support national efforts to establish technical units within the subregional organizations which will, *inter alia*: (a) assist Governments in the formulation of subregional transit transport policies; (b) prepare technical studies to back up proposals for joint projects at the subregional level; (c) liaise with the private sector in order to identify priority areas for its involvement; and (d) act as subregional counterparts of donor agencies in their commercialization and privatization support programmes.

23. The role of UNCTAD in support of landlocked and transit developing countries was fully supported and it was considered desirable that these activities remain a priority item in the work programme of UNCTAD. For such activities to be fully effective, it was recommended that UNCTAD continue to liaise closely with the subregional intergovernmental organizations in its endeavours. It was also recommended that international organizations, regional commissions and United Nations agencies dealing with the development of transport and communications should include transit transport activities in their future work programmes.

24. In order to undertake a global review of progress in the development of transit transport systems, particularly taking into consideration the global framework for transit transport cooperation and the above conclusions and recommendations, it was recommended that consideration be given to convening another meeting of governmental experts from landlocked and transit developing countries and representatives of donor countries and financial and development institutions in 1999.

III. Activities of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

A. Review of the progress made in the development of transit systems in the landlocked and transit developing countries

25. In order to facilitate the review of the progress made in the development of transit systems by the Third Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD made arrangements, with the financial support of UNDP, to undertake comprehensive regional and subregional analytical studies which highlighted recent developments in the transit transport sector of landlocked and transit developing countries and made recommendations for future action. These studies elaborated the programmes that have been under way to rehabilitate and maintain transit infrastructure and to improve management practices and operations. They particularly focused on those programmes and projects that are being implemented in a subregional context. They also highlighted the new transit transport policy initiatives taken by individual countries, and contained a number of priority capital projects and technical assistance programmes for which donor support is being sought.[4] The results of these studies, as well as the contribution made by the regional commissions, provided the basis for the preparation of the basic document[5] made available to the above-mentioned Meeting.

B. Consultative group meetings of landlocked and transit developing countries

26. In paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 50/97, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD was requested, in collaboration with the donor countries and institutions, in particular UNDP, the regional commissions and relevant subregional institutions, to organize specific consultative groups to identify priority areas for action at the national and subregional levels and draw up action programmes for the period 1996-1997. The process of these consultative meetings began with the convening of one such meeting for Mongolia and its transit neighbours, namely China and the Russian Federation. The meeting, which was organized by UNCTAD and UNDP in close cooperation with the Government of Mongolia, was held at Ulaanbaatar, from 20 to 22 May 1997. Representatives of Japan and the Republic of Korea attended the meeting as observers.

27. The meeting discussed the recent developments that had taken place in the subregion in the light of the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community which had been adopted at the Second Meeting of Governmental Experts.[6] In that regard, the meeting first reviewed the various fundamental elements of the transit transport policy framework, which would ensure the establishment of a viable environment that is conducive to improved transit efficiency. Those elements included the improvement of current bilateral transit agreements, the promotion of a complementary comprehensive subregional agreement and international transit conventions and agreements, the development of alternative routes, the commercialization of transit services and the development of potential for expanded subregional trade. Second, the current physical weaknesses of the transit transport infrastructure and proposals for further improvements were addressed. The meeting emphasized the role that external assistance should play in providing support for the implementation of the priority programmes agreed at the meeting. The outcome of the meeting was the adoption of the Ulaanbaatar Memorandum of Understanding which contains highlights of the issues outlined above.

28. The consultations between other landlocked countries and their transit neighbours in Africa and Latin America were held within the framework of existing institutional arrangements under the various subregional schemes. The regular meetings of the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC), the Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor in East and Central Africa, the Ministerial Conference of West and Central African States on Maritime Transport (MINCONMAR) and of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) in Latin America have served as forums for the exchange of views on priority areas for action to improve the transit transport systems. These include the further development of missing links in the transit transport infrastructural network, the maintenance of existing facilities, the removal of non-physical barriers, such as cumbersome transit procedures and regulations, which still constitute a serious constraint on some of the transit corridors, the strengthening of mechanisms to effectively implement subregional transit agreements, the continued liberalization of transit services and the greater involvement

of the private sector in transit transport operations. In Central Asia, recent meetings convened to discuss the possibilities of establishing a framework for a subregional transit agreement also offered an opportunity to discuss some of those priority areas. In South-East Asia, regular transit bilateral consultations also address future transit transport requirements. During the Third Meeting of Governmental Experts, informal discussions were also held by some experts from landlocked and transit developing countries.

C. Other activities

1. Review of the Northern Corridor Transit Agreement

29. During the annual meeting of the Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor, held in November 1996, the Governments of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo formally decided to extend the Northern Corridor Transit Agreement, which had expired in October 1996, for another 10 years. The member States, however, agreed that it was necessary to review some of the protocols in order to take into account the new developments in the transit system. They therefore requested the Permanent Secretariat of the Coordination Authority, based in Mombasa, Kenya, to seek technical assistance to undertake that review. In view of the previous involvement of UNCTAD in supporting the Permanent Secretariat in this area, UNCTAD fielded a mission which drew up a work plan and time schedule for the review. The work plan envisages the convening of a series of national workshops in the individual member States, at which country-specific transit transport policies and other actions that need to be taken into account in the review of the Agreement would be discussed. Also proposed is the convening of a subregional workshop which is designed to harmonize views regarding new activities in the various subsectors. These activities will also reflect the role of private sector transit operators. Consultations are now under way with the Permanent Secretariat regarding follow-up activities.

2. Automated System of Customs Data Entry, Control and Management

30. Efficient customs formalities contribute in an important way to the expedient processing and clearance of goods in transit. Major benefits can be expected when neighbouring countries are using the same or compatible customs systems, facilitating the exchange of information and further reducing delays.

31. The reform, modernization and computerization of customs formalities are addressed in ASYCUDA projects using a modern software package which has been developed and is being implemented by UNCTAD. The major benefits brought about by these projects are streamlined customs procedures, faster clearance of goods, increased collection of revenue and up-to-date and reliable foreign trade statistics.

32. At present, ASYCUDA projects are under way or completed in over 70 countries throughout the world, including 14 landlocked countries and 15 transit countries. A specific transit monitoring module, using a set of messages based on international standards, is currently being developed for ASYCUDA, with the possibility of linking it into ACIS, other cargo tracking systems and enforcement databases. The work of ASYCUDA was also discussed in the recent UNCTAD expert meeting on information technology (see paras. 43-47 below).

33. The development of ASYCUDA has been financed through contributions from the Governments of Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as UNDP, the European Union, the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

3. Advanced Cargo Information System

34. One of the main technical cooperation programmes between UNCTAD and the developing countries is the development and installation of the Advanced Cargo Information System (ACIS) which is a tool box of computer applications that constitute a transport logistics information system capable of addressing multimodal cargo transit and transport resource problems. It provides transport operators with reliable, useful and immediate data on transport operations, giving the location of goods and transport equipment.

35. Over the past two years, ACIS has been either partially or fully installed in the following landlocked and transit countries:

(a) **PortTracker**. In the ports of Tema (Ghana), Mombasa (Kenya) and Dar es Salaam, the Harbour Master and Gate Pass modules are at various stages of installation;

(b) **RailTracker**. Far more effort and resources have gone into the development and implementation of the

railway module of ACIS, at the request of users. As a result, goods and rolling stock are being tracked on the following railway networks: Senegal and Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso; Ghana; Cameroon; the Sudan; Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda; TAZARA, Malawi, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Bangladesh.

36. There is one railway network on which, at present, only rolling stock is being tracked: Ghana Railways.

37. The following benefits to the railways that are currently using the ACIS RailTracker have been confirmed, both independently and by the users themselves:

(a) Comprehensive data are now available on-line for traffic and other managers. This includes such information as the position of wagons on the network, the number of broken-down wagons, wagons loaded for more than three days, wagons in workshops and so forth;

(b) Weekly or monthly reports for various managerial levels within the railway administrations can now be easily generated. This includes such information as weekly loading data, customer and commodity performance, average fuel issued per locomotive kilometre, train transit time and so forth;

(c) Customer information has drastically improved. In the past, it took four to five days to inform a customer of the location of his wagon; this information can now be provided instantaneously;

(d) Tangible positive results have been registered in wagon turn-around time, wagon availability or average repair time, wagon hiring charges and so forth;

(e) The operational managements of transit and landlocked country railways, where networks are connected, have been integrated into the same system, thereby facilitating the circulation of transit traffic.

38. Funding for ACIS has been largely provided by the European Commission. Funding has also been provided in the past by UNDP and the World Bank, as well as by German and French development institutions.

4. Central Asian external trade and transit initiative: rebuilding the Silk Road

39. The Central Asian external and transit transport initiative was launched in April 1995. The initiative is aimed at reducing transit costs for the Central Asian republics, thereby promoting their external trade and bolstering their economic growth.

40. The technical meeting on the transit transport links of Central Asia with world markets, held at Ankara from 7 to 9 November 1995, outlined a programme of reform designed to improve transit transport systems in Central Asia. A transit transport framework agreement was considered a cornerstone of this reform programme.

41. The elaboration of the transit transport framework agreement took a decisive turn when a meeting of senior officials from the Central Asian republics, convened at Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, in November 1996, adopted a common draft and agreed that it would form the basis for negotiations with their transit neighbours. This transit transport framework agreement outlines regional transit transport cooperative arrangements, including the development, maintenance and management of transport infrastructure and services, and the harmonization of transit regulations and customs procedures and documentation. With regard to institutional arrangements, the framework agreement envisages the involvement of governmental institutions at all levels and the establishment of a secretariat to help monitor the implementation of the various sectoral protocols of the agreement.

42. The first negotiations between the Central Asian republics and their transit neighbours have been scheduled for September/October 1997. Participating countries will include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

5. Expert meeting on information technology

43. As mandated by the UNCTAD Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development, an expert meeting was held in May 1997 on the use of information technologies to make transit arrangements more effective. The expert meeting recalled that, despite the rapid progress made in information technology, customs transit continues to be largely based on procedures involving the transmission of paper documents. The meeting stressed the crucial contribution of information technology to the proper functioning of customs transit systems. The meeting underlined that transport information systems of track transit cargo should be further enhanced with a view to automating data capture. It considered that the current lack of such systems in many countries jeopardized the efficiency of transit transport operators and was also detrimental to the efficient performance of customs transit systems. The meeting recalled the use of ASYCUDA and ACIS in many countries at various levels of development. It agreed that the

computerization of transit procedures could significantly contribute to speeding up the procedures and reducing their cost, to the benefit of trade, while enhancing the efficiency of customs control and cargo tracking.

44. The meeting expressed the belief that UNCTAD should, in cooperation with all other interested parties, work towards developing a transit module, in the context of ASYCUDA and ACIS.

45. The meeting considered that the transit module could cover all functions of customs control and transport monitoring of transit goods from the beginning to the completion of the transit operation, including the release of securities, where appropriate. It should be open to similar computerized systems and, to the extent permitted by national laws, it should permit relevant access by trade and transport operators. Messages used should be based on existing international standards, in particular EDIFACT. A group of countries, both transit and landlocked, with priority assigned to the least developed among them, could be targeted as pilot sites for such an electronic transit module.

46. The meeting also considered that UNCTAD should cooperate with organizations involved in the development and maintenance of transit systems, in particular the Economic Commission for Europe, the European Commission and regional groupings in developing countries, as well as relevant organizations in the public and private sectors.

47. The meeting recognized the need for a comprehensive customs transit system and an integrated cargo tracking system open to all operators. It also recognized that UNCTAD should continue to support current users of ASYCUDA and ACIS and pursue the development and further implementation, including promotion and ongoing support, of both systems.

IV. Actions by individual countries and international and intergovernmental organizations on behalf of landlocked developing countries

48. The information provided by several landlocked and transit developing countries, other developing countries and developed countries, as well as international and intergovernmental organizations, on activities related to the improvement of the transit transport systems is summarized below.[7]

49. The landlocked developing countries outlined their country programmes to further develop their transit transport infrastructure, including the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities and the development of missing links in the road transit network. They also elaborated the legal frameworks and administrative regulations governing the movement of transit cargo. It was generally emphasized that there was a need to review and refine the existing bilateral and subregional transit agreements in order to take into account recent developments in the transit system, such as the expansion of existing facilities, the establishment of inland container terminals (dry ports) and the use of new transit routes by rail, road and inland waterways. It was further pointed out that there was a need to further strengthen mechanisms for the monitoring and enforcement of transit agreements. In that connection, the importance of stricter control of axle-load regulations and maintenance procedures, as well as the further harmonization and simplification of customs procedures and documentation and road user charges at the subregional level, was particularly underlined. The need for the expansion of regional and national training programmes for transit transport managements and operators was also emphasized.

50. The transit developing countries provided information on the development programmes under way to improve the transit facilities they offer to facilitate the movement of transit cargo to and from neighbouring landlocked States. These related in particular to berthing facilities in ports, warehousing facilities, road and rail transit services and the facilitation of customs clearance procedures and regulations in ports and cross-border points. Some of the countries also referred to the preferential treatment accorded landlocked countries with regard to charges levied on transit cargo and to the trade preferences granted to them. Special reference was made to the existence of bilateral and subregional transit agreements and arrangements between transit countries and the neighbouring landlocked countries, which generally constitute the legal framework within which the modalities for providing most of the above facilities and services are outlined and defined. Although the implementation of these agreements and arrangements varies, the commitment of most transit countries in general to improve transit services is unquestionable.

51. Several of the transit developing countries also outlined other measures undertaken to help improve transit transport efficiency, including the liberalization of transit services. Many of them are deliberately encouraging competition in the transit transport sector, in particular in the road transit subsector where the role of private sector operators is increasing. Rail and port services are also

increasingly being commercialized and the responsible institutions are being granted greater operational autonomy.

52. The responses of the international organizations were diverse. The regional commissions and the World Bank have significant programmes under way that are specifically targeted at financial and technical assistance to improve the transit transport infrastructures and the quality of transit services. Although the Bank generally offers such assistance within the framework of country infrastructure projects, special attention has also been given in recent years to some regional programmes, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. These programmes are also focused on improving the transit policy framework that encourages liberalization of transit services, with a view to enhancing operational efficiency in the transit transport sector. Initiatives to improve management practices and strengthen the legal and fiscal transit transport regimes are also being supported.

53. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific are implementing most of their assistance projects within the framework of Transport and Communications Decade programmes. The bulk of the direct support of the Commissions is, however, limited to technical assistance programmes largely funded by UNDP. The recent focus of these programmes in Asia has been on assisting the landlocked developing countries of Central Asia to expand current road and rail routes in order to promote subregional trade and transit transport links with new potential transit neighbours. This assistance has also covered other areas related to transit facilitation through the improvement of the legal transit regimes. Both UNCTAD and UNDP are fully involved in the assistance provided in this area.

54. In recent years, the ECA assistance programme has also been focused on the monitoring of the implementation of Decade projects to improve the physical transport infrastructure, as well as providing direct technical assistance in such areas as transit facilitation, strengthening of transit legal frameworks, improvement of transit transport information systems, improvement of safety, security and navigation of inland waterways, and the development of cooperative arrangements in the air freight industry.

55. Other international organizations provided information on their programmes of assistance to the landlocked developing countries in their respective areas of competence. The International Civil Aviation Organization outlined its activities to improve air transport facilities in various landlocked developing countries, including the expansion of air transport services in rural areas. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations outlined its technical assistance programmes to support food production, food security, forest resource management and the fisheries sector, both at the country and subregional level, which are designed to enhance the supply capacity in the landlocked developing countries. The International Monetary Fund has been heavily involved in supporting several landlocked countries by providing to their financial institutions technical assistance, enhanced structural adjustment facilities, stand-by arrangements, compensatory and contingency financing facilities, and training assistance.

56. The responses of the developed countries reflect the recent sentiments expressed by several donor countries that have actively participated in various international forums dealing with landlocked developing countries. There is a clear commitment to promote programmes in most landlocked countries, which are designed to improve transit transport infrastructure and services. Many of these programmes are being implemented within the framework of subregional institutions, such as SATCC, the Economic Community of West African States, the Central African Customs and Economic Union, the Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor, MERCOSUR and the Economic Cooperation Organization in Asia. This approach encourages close cooperation between landlocked countries and their transit neighbours, and enhances the commitment of both these groups of countries to strengthen and improve the implementation of their subregional transit agreements and other arrangements related to subregional trade.

Notes

[1] TD/B/42(1)/11-TD/B/LDC/AC.1/7.

[2] For the report of the Third Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions see TD/B/44/7-TD/B/LDC/AC.1/11.

[3] TD/B/COM.3/EM.1/L.1.

[4] For more details see the following reports, prepared by UNCTAD consultants in 1997: review of the recent progress made in the development of transit transport systems in West Africa and proposals for future action; overview of the recent developments of the transit transport facilities and services for Rwanda's exports and imports; review of the progress made in the development of transit systems in East Africa and proposals for future action; review of the progress made in the development of transit transport in Southern Africa and proposals for future action; review of the progress made in the development of transit systems in Nepal, Bhutan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic and proposals for future

action; and review of the progress made in the development of transit systems in Latin America and proposals for future action. The reports are available in the UNCTAD secretariat.

[5] Progress report by the secretariat of UNCTAD on specific action related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries (TD/B/42(1)/14).

[6] TD/B/42(1)/11-TD/B/LDC/AC.1/7, annex I.

[7] Detailed information contained in the replies is available in the UNCTAD secretariat. The regional and subregional studies carried out by UNCTAD in the landlocked and transit developing countries as part of the substantive preparations for the Third Meeting of Governmental Experts provided additional information.

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THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The attached document contains the report of the Human Rights Area of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) on the verification of compliance with the commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights. In accordance with the practice established since the Mission's inception, I shall convey a copy of this report to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the request that it be brought to the attention of the members of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

2. This report, which is being transmitted by the Head of the Mission, is the seventh on the subject, and covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 1997. During this period, the Mission continued to carry out its work normally and, as indicated in the report which I submitted to the General Assembly on 30 June 1997 (A/51/936), continued to verify compliance with the commitments of the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements.

3. I wish to reiterate my thanks to the Government of Guatemala and to the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) for their cooperation with the Mission, without which it would have been unable to function. I also wish to express my gratitude for the ongoing collaboration and support provided to the Mission by the bodies of the United Nations system in Guatemala, represented by the Resident Coordinator of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System.

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Annex

SEVENTH REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS VERIFICATION MISSION IN GUATEMALA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the period covered by this report (1 January to 30 June 1997), the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) began to verify compliance with all the agreements included in the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace (A/51/796-S/1997/114, annex II), and continued to verify compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as the "Comprehensive Agreement") signed on 29 March 1994 (A/48/928-S/1994/448, annex I) and with the human rights aspects of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hereinafter referred to as the "Agreement on Indigenous Rights") signed on 31 March 1995 (A/49/882-S/1995/256, annex).

2. This report refers to the commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement which are not included in the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements (A/51/796-S/1997/114, annex I), as noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the results of the verification of compliance with that Agreement (A/51/936, para. 5).

3. In the course of its verification functions, the Mission continued its contacts with each of the signatories. In particular, it maintained a close relationship with the Presidential Human Rights Commission (COPREDEH).

II. VERIFICATION OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND OF COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER COMMITMENTS MADE IN THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT

Commitment I. General commitment to human rights

4. In the Comprehensive Agreement, the parties mandated the Mission to receive, consider and follow up complaints regarding possible human rights violations and empowered it, inter alia, to collect relevant information, interview any person or group of persons freely and privately and visit government offices and Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemelteca (URNG) camps freely and without prior notice when this was deemed necessary.

5. The parties also made MINUGUA responsible for establishing whether the competent national institutions were carrying out the necessary investigations autonomously, effectively and in accordance with the Political Constitution and international human rights norms.

6. In addition, they gave MINUGUA the function of determining whether or not a violation of human rights had occurred on the basis of whatever information it might obtain in the exercise of its powers, taking into consideration any investigations that the competent constitutional institutions might carry out.

7. During the period under review, the Mission continued to act in strict accordance with this mandate and with the rules contained in the handbook on verification procedures, one of whose basic principles is the guarantee of confidentiality. Any person or organization that files a complaint with the Mission is entitled to request that personal data or any other information provided be kept secret. Without prejudice to this principle, MINUGUA explains the importance of approaching the competent State institutions to request investigation of the case, and encourages those who submit complaints to do so.

8. While the statistics contained in the appendix serve as a quantitative reference for the analysis of the human rights situation, the conclusions of these reports are also based on a qualitative analysis of the situation.

Analysis of verification of the rights accorded priority under the Comprehensive Agreement

9. During the period under review, the Mission admitted for verification a total of 182 complaints concerning 1,503 alleged violations. Thus, the number of complaints admitted continued to decline, as did the number of alleged violations to which they referred.

10. The decline is sharpest in relation to the right to life, to integrity and security of person and to individual liberty, and indicates, in the Mission's view, a decrease in the number of violations committed by State agents. This opinion is based on the conviction that, today, serious violations are very unlikely to go unreported to MINUGUA, since the Mission's presence for more than two years has won the confidence of the victims. Moreover, the Mission has not noted any increase in the fear of possible reprisals for filing complaints.

11. Most of the complaints admitted concern alleged violations of the right to due process (40.11 per cent). About 80 per cent of these alleged violations concern either the State's legal duty to investigate and punish violations or the obstruction of justice.

12. According to the verification, particularly of the right to life, not all of the cases reported involve acts committed directly by State agents in the exercise of their functions. Rather, many refer to situations in which the State failed in its duty to provide guarantees. This duty is impaired when institutions fail to comply with their legal obligation to provide, in a timely manner, for appropriate means of guaranteeing full respect for human rights or of carrying out prompt, exhaustive and effective investigations when such rights are violated.

13. The duty to provide guarantees is not one of abstention, as in the case of the prohibition against the violation of individual rights, but one of action. It involves organizing the State machinery so as to enable it to ensure the full enjoyment or exercise of human rights. This is a legal requirement with which the State is gradually and progressively improving its compliance.

14. It is therefore important to take note of advances such as the establishment of the Commission on the Strengthening of the Justice System and

the steps taken towards the creation and deployment of the new National Civil Police (see A/51/936, paras. 40-49).

15. In relation to the right to life, the Mission admitted 44 complaints (24.18 per cent). There was a significant decrease in the number which attributed the violation to direct action by State agents. The largest number of complaints referred to extrajudicial executions or deaths in violation of legal guarantees (23), followed by death threats (15) and attempted extrajudicial executions (6).

16. Since a given complaint may allege the existence of one or more violations, the total number of reported violations of the right to life was 65. During the period under review, 60 violations were found to have occurred. Of the 19 attributed to extrajudicial executions or deaths in violation of legal guarantees, 16 took place in 1996 and 3 during the current period.

17. In the verified cases in which State agents were directly implicated, the alleged responsibility lies with agents of the National Police or members of the armed forces for abuse of power or excessive use of force in the pursuit of suspects, or for taking advantage of their position for personal motives.

18. The Mission also followed up cases of serious violations of the right to life of alleged criminals, which, it has been suggested, could represent a pattern of "social cleansing", since the killings in question resembled extrajudicial executions or occurred under circumstances which could point to planned and coordinated actions carried out according to a pre-established modus operandi. Despite these follow-up efforts, it has not yet been possible to collect all of the information needed to determine whether State agents were involved.

19. According to the complaints, death threats continue to be made against human rights activists, politicians, prosecutors and social leaders. Even though such threats do not necessarily come from State agents, their explicit relation to the victims' activities and the fear they produce seriously hamper the victims' exercise of their functions. This is clearly exemplified by the case of the prosecutor investigating the Xamán incident and by the cases of several other departmental prosecutors.

20. The overall declining trend was also reflected in the number of complaints of violations of the right to integrity and security of person, of which the Mission admitted 33 (18.1 per cent). They reported 686 alleged violations, most of which were found to have occurred.

21. With respect to new cases of torture, nine alleged violations were reported to MINUGUA, which confirmed one of them. It also confirmed the existence of this violation in six of the eight complaints of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The remaining complaints are still being verified.

22. Regarding the 508 alleged violations involving the excessive use of force, all were found to have occurred. Most of them took place during the apprehension of criminals, an area in which the complaints received represent

only a small percentage of actual cases. However, the persistent decline in the number of complaints seems to indicate that some overall progress has been made.

23. The fact that all these violations could be confirmed during the period under review was due not to a reversal of the positive trend towards moderation among the National Police, but rather to the concentration of violations in one exceptional and alarming case. On 5 June, in San Pedro Saquetepéquez, San Marcos, a large-scale police operation was carried out to search business premises for contraband. This operation was marked by the excessive number of police officers involved, the abuse of authority and the lack of proportion between the aim of the operation and the degree of force used.

24. With respect to violations of this right in the form of acts of intimidation other than death threats, 143 complaints of alleged violations were admitted during the period under review, 24 of which were found to have occurred.

25. During the six months covered by the report, 27 complaints (14.84 per cent) were admitted concerning the right to individual liberty; this is an appreciable decline, particularly as regards arbitrary detention or violation of legal guarantees.

26. The complaints, for the most part, blame members of the National Police. In some cases it is claimed that irregularities are hidden by the police who doctor reports, making it appear that an offence is more serious than it is, deliberately commit errors when recording the facts or even deny that anyone is being detained.

27. During the period covered by the report, MINUGUA admitted three complaints of enforced disappearances; it established that a violation had occurred in respect of one complaint admitted during the previous period and that no violation had occurred in respect of one complaint admitted during this period; the other two complaints are being verified.

28. The most serious of these complaints - which send a disturbing signal concerning the positive perception that was noted in the previous report (A/51/790, para.19) - relates to the so called "Mincho case". On 20 May 1997, the Mission confirmed, in a press release, that Juan José Cabrera Rodas had been a member of the Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA) and had gone by the name "Mincho" or "Bejamín". It also confirmed that Cabrera Rodas had been involved, together with Rafael Augusto Baldizón Núñez, known as "Commander Isaías", in the kidnapping of Olga Alvaredo de Novella (ibid., para. 63). During the verification, evidence was obtained which suggested that the two had been captured, but Cabrera Rodas' whereabouts are not yet known.

29. After 20 May, the verification turned up further evidence to suggest that the Presidential staff had carried out the anti-kidnapping operation and that they might have exceeded their functions and overstepped the boundary of what is permissible under the rule of law.

30. The investigation carried out by the Public Prosecutor's Office has not made any further headway to date. Although the latter has not done all that it is empowered to do, it did take the basic steps necessary to collect the facts and did so in a timely manner. Nevertheless, during the period under review, it has not received due cooperation from the Executive. The very day the Mission issued its press release and based on the information contained therein, the Attorney General requested information from the President of the Republic, the Presidential Chief of Staff, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of the Interior and the Director of the National Police regarding the alleged disappearance of Cabrera Rodas. In their replies the State authorities sidestepped the specific questions on the case or said that they knew about it only from the media.

31. In order to make progress in the clarification of the case it is essential for the Public Prosecutor's Office to exercise its investigative powers to the full. The Government has repeatedly stated that it wants the case to be resolved and that it is ready to cooperate extensively to that end. Nonetheless, if that readiness is to be translated into action, there must be a change in the Government's attitude; as a first step it should make known the names of the agents who participated in the operation. For its part MINUGUA, in fulfilment of its mandate and in the exercise of its responsibilities, will continue with the verification of the complaint, will establish whether the Public Prosecutor's Office is conducting the necessary investigations independently, effectively and in accordance with the Constitution and international norms concerning human rights, and will offer that institution all possible assistance.

32. During the period under review, 73 complaints (40.1 per cent) were admitted, concerning 447 allegations of violations of the right to due legal process, and 170 violations were confirmed. The complaints admitted reveal a large drop compared to the previous six-month period. It should be noted that most of the violations reported (273) relate to the legal duty of the State to prevent, investigate and punish, and account for some 25 per cent of the total number of complaints concerning the series of rights accorded priority.

33. Although the number of admitted complaints relating to that right has also dropped significantly, this fact should not necessarily be taken to mean that there has been progress in observance of that right. Unlike the situation with the other rights accorded priority, in regard to this one the Mission, in practice, receives complaints on only a small percentage of all the offences committed in the country.

34. Verification confirms that, as a rule, the violations observed in respect of that legal duty are characterized, inter alia by the following: (a) failure by agents of the Public Prosecutor's Office to take steps which are essential if the investigations are to advance, or delay in doing so; (b) lack of impetus of the proceedings, which is characteristic of the courts, and the time it takes to pronounce judgement, even in cases where the evidence has been gathered promptly, a suspect has been captured or eyewitnesses are available; (c) the inability of the State to operate the witness protection programme when eyewitnesses in serious cases report that they have been subjected to threats or intimidation; (d) continuing lack of coordination between the National Police

and the Public Prosecutor's Office, which is detrimental to judicial investigations; and (e) the failure by the National Police to carry out an arrest warrant.

35. Verification has also confirmed the existence of grave deficiencies in the implementation, by other State organs, of the generic obligation to cooperate with the courts and to refrain from obstructing the investigation or the course of proceedings.

36. A typical case is that of Cándido Noriega Estrada who was accused of committing 156 offences between 1982 and 1983, when he was exercising the functions of military commissioner and chief of the Civilian Self-Defence Patrols of Chinique, El Quiché. During the trail there were grave violations of due process and clear institutional deficiencies which can be said to have resulted in denial of justice to the victims. Noriega was acquitted of all charges against him, which were characterized as murder, kidnapping, rape, aggravated robbery, aggravated theft, arson, threats, injury, illegal detention, assault and illegal entry. The violations of due process included: the fact that the judge appointed to hear the case was the person who had conducted the initial investigation; serious problems regarding interpretation of the language, which affected the 37 witnesses for the Public Prosecutor's Office, all of whom were indigenous people; psychological coercion against the witnesses for the party bringing the charges; discriminatory methodology used for according probative value to testimony, depending on whether or not it was given by indigenous people. The first-mentioned irregularity prompted the Supreme Court, which had appointed the said judge to hear the case, to subsequently remove him.

37. The Mission continued the verification of due process in the proceedings of investigations into illegal burials. There have been cases - for example Cuarto Pueblo, Ixcán, in Quiché department and Rabinal in Baja Verapaz department - where, although clandestine cemeteries were uncovered, and the respective legal proceedings instituted more than three years ago, to date no progress has been made. Despite the scepticism of relatives, the new political context has renewed hopes that these cases may be tried and judicially resolved.

38. Verification of due process also covers observance of procedural guarantees when individuals are brought to trial. Despite the recorded decrease in the number of complaints, analysis of these complaints shows that there continue to be violations of certain procedural guarantees, particularly of the right to be tried within a reasonable period of time. MINUGUA found that, on the whole, trials take longer than they are supposed to under the law.

39. There are also numerous cases where the right to have a suitable interpreter has been affected because of the shortage of translators, which seriously limits the access of vast sectors of the indigenous population to the administration of justice; the same is true of the right to defence, since there continue to be not enough lawyers compared to the number of persons being tried.

40. During the period covered by this report the Mission did not receive any further complaints regarding political rights.

41. With regard to the right to freedom of expression, the Mission received complaints of acts of intimidation directed at reporters; these remain in the pre-verification stage, since there is insufficient information about the persons making the complaints.

42. MINUGUA is carefully verifying the complaint regarding physical aggression by two armed individuals against Óscar Granados Ara, president of the Unión de Cronistas Parlamentarios and founder of the Unidad de Prensa, an entity that coordinates 13 press associations. The individuals expressed animosity towards reporters and left a threatening message at the victim's home.

43. During the period under review, although the Mission did not receive any complaints about violation of the right to freedom of movement and residence, it found that the exercise of these freedoms had been jeopardized in some cases relating to freedom of association or assembly.

44. The Mission admitted five complaints, concerning 225 violations of freedom of association and assembly. Verification revealed that, in one case, individuals who were members of the Ixcán Grande cooperative were harrassed for political reasons, and that the State failed in its duty to guarantee respect for such freedoms. Another grave complaint concerns the exercise of freedom of association and trade union rights by municipal employees in Zacapa.

Commitment II. Commitment to strengthening institutions for the protection of human rights

45. In the Comprehensive Agreement the Government reiterated its willingness to respect the autonomy and protect the freedom of action of the judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office in the face of pressure, whatever its kind or origin. MINUGUA believes that even though there have been instances in which some agents of the Executive have impeded the action of these agencies, and even though the latter still do not have adequate resources, the Government has fulfilled this commitment. The verification reveals the development of the strengthening of the judiciary and of the Public Prosecutor's Office.

46. With regard to the judiciary, it is worth noting: (a) the completion of the work on the preliminary bill on a career judicial service; (b) the progressive increase in the number of courts within the capital and outside; and (c) the decision by the Supreme Court to raise the salaries of judges and magistrates.

47. At the same time, it is disturbing to find that in order to fill the judgeships in the new courts, the Supreme Court has reinstated, albeit as a transitory measure, the system of appointing judges without having candidates take competitive examinations, and be evaluated at the Judicial Training School.

48. During the period under review the Public Defender's Office has grown stronger as demonstrated by: (a) the speed with which the public defenders have filed applications and the fact that they have intervened in more discussions than any body of lawyers in the country; (b) the institutions of a competitive examination for hiring new staff; and (c) the establishment of a pilot Unit for

Minors which will play an important role in the implementation of the Children's Code.

49. The Public Prosecutor's Office is pursing an institutional policy designed to promote growth and rational development of the institution, with a view to increasing its technical and administrative capacity. The aim is to increase its efficiency in the investigation of crime and to increase its presence in and proximity to the rural population and marginal areas.

50. The Public Prosecutor's Office approved the holding of a competitive examination for all prosecutors currently employed at that institution. However, it amended its regulations so as to enable any persons who did not take - or who did not pass - the exam to continue carrying out their functions, but without being part of the career service. This double standard has created confusion regarding the real extent of the implementation of the career service in respect of prosecutors.

51. In addition, the Public Prosecutor's Office has yet to adopt a final decision regarding a proper system for monitoring the activities of prosecuting agents and assistants, although the need for such a system has been made clear by the fact that, in some cases, those officials have failed to carry out some of their duties.

52. With regard to the Office of the Counsel for Human Rights, the Comprehensive Agreement commits the Government to continue supporting its strengthening. Whereas the Counsel for Human Rights requested a budget of 37 million quetzales for 1997, the proposal which the Ministry of Finance submitted to Congress reduced the amount to 21.5 million; the budget finally approved was the same as in 1996, namely, 19.5 million quetzales. The Mission believes that this is not enough to enable the Counsel for Human Rights to carry out his mandate efficiently, particularly when one takes into account the need to establish new departmental offices and to maintain some in precarious situations, to strengthen the independent capacity to investigate complaints of human rights violations and to carry out the role of monitoring observance of the right to justice and due process.

53. One indicator of the critical financial situation in which the departmental auxiliary offices of the Counsel for Human Rights find themselves, was the fact that several such offices in regions of great social conflict, such as Cantabal, temporarily suspended their activities. This all serves to underscore the importance of compliance with the commitment to strengthen the Office of the Counsel for Human Rights, which is planned for the second phase of the implementation, compliance and verification timetable for the Peace Agreements.

54. The Mission continued to support the strengthening of the Office of the Counsel for Human Rights by providing continuing technical advice, and it began to verify with particular care the commitment regarding improving the technical and material conditions available to the Counsel for Human Rights in carrying out his tasks (A/51/796-S/1997/114, Annex I, para. 73).

Commitment III. Commitment against impunity

55. Even before the armed conflict came to an end, it was clear, as a consequence of the peace process, that there had been a qualitative change in the human rights situation. Increasingly, the violations resulted less from the actions of the active participants in the conflict than from the persisting structural defects in the criminal investigation system and the administration of justice. This trend became more marked after the peace was signed. In the period under review, most of the violations were not the acts of members of URNG or of the Army or people linked with the Army, but of officials of the National Police, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary whose actions or failure to act affect the legal duty of the State to investigate and punish, and seriously impair the above-mentioned commitment.

56. Most of the unlawful acts committed in the country, whether human rights violations or ordinary crimes, still go unpunished by the law. It is an illusion to think that crime can be eliminated so long as the perpetrators, accomplices and accessories go unpunished for their unlawful acts or when the courts are bringing to trial only the actual participants in organized crime and have no effect on their higher-level ring leaders.

57. During this period, although the Army collaborated in ensuring public security pursuant to Decree No. 90-96, that did not alter the high incidence of ordinary crimes reported previously, especially kidnappings.

58. The scant progress made in bringing people to trial for serious violations, (the cases of Xamán, Mack, Carpio, Sas Rompiche and others) demonstrates that impunity continues to be the practice. The processing of cases is still extremely slow, and not only in the cases cited. A clear example was recourse to the remedy of amparo as a delaying tactic in the Xamán case where the practice reached new heights. During the period under review, accused persons invoked that remedy 15 times, thereby delaying oral proceedings. Moreover, the cooperation of the Army with the courts in cases where the criminal responsibility of Army personnel is under investigation remains inadequate. There are still situations indicating that the institutional support of the Army goes beyond simply a legal defence, as in the case of the former member of the Presidential Staff who killed Pedro Haroldo Sas Rompiche in February 1996 and is still an officer in the Army today.

59. Nor have the courts issued legal rulings bringing to trial high-level Army officers who may be involved in violations committed by their subordinates or were accessories to those violations.

60. In those situations, the official policy of the Army is to attempt to limit its responsibility and to refrain from actively collaborating in the clarification and punishment, arguing that that is exclusively the business of the courts.

61. The impunity phenomenon goes beyond the framework of the courts in scope and complexity and is becoming a factor influencing both individual and group behaviour, thus undermining the rule of law to a degree proportionate to the absence of the State in the region concerned.

62. One form of behaviour noted during this period is the lynchings of presumed perpetrators of minor crimes leading to their deaths. It should be noted that from time to time the authorities, particularly the National Police, have tried to prevent such actions. However, in most cases, they obviously were unwilling to subject the guilty parties to criminal prosecution. When such condemnable acts are committed, any chance of applying the rules of due process is ruled out. This practice of "taking justice into your own hands" reflects a serious deficiency in the rule of law, both at the level of the collective legal conscience and of the objective capacity of the guardian institutions of the State responsible for public security and the administration of justice.

63. During the period under review, the Mission received a complaint claiming that in submitting the draft National Reconciliation Act to Congress, the Government violated Commitment III of the Comprehensive Agreement not to support the adoption of legislative or other measures aimed at preventing the prosecution and punishment of those guilty of human rights violations.

64. After examining the arguments in the complaint, the Mission concluded that there had been no violation in view of the following facts:

(a) The Act was introduced by the Government and approved by the Congress of the Republic with the intention of complying with a commitment established in the Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of URNG. There was no restriction on the ability of the parties to enter into or amend agreements in any negotiating process, provided they respected the domestic laws and the international commitments made by the State, particularly in matters affecting human rights.

(b) In international human rights law, which is valid and now in force in Guatemala, there is no rule that establishes a general and standing obligation to punish as a crime those who violate those human rights; nor is there any provision that prohibits the adoption, regardless of the circumstances, of measures such as amnesty and pardon. From that point of view, no human rights treaty ratified by the State of Guatemala was violated by the Government in introducing the National Reconciliation Act.

(c) Nor has the action taken by the Government nullified Commitment III of the Comprehensive Agreement since it is in force at the present time and after adoption of the National Reconciliation Act, any move by the Government to support the adoption of measures contrary to that Act would violate the Agreement.

65. Prior to receipt of that complaint, the Mission had given careful study to the Act and it was its considered view that the Act was sufficiently exceptional and restrictive in applicability to make it compatible with action to combat impunity and respect for the right of victims to the truth and compensation. That judgement was based on the following considerations: (a) that discharge from criminal liability referred only to a few crimes provided that they met specific requirements (arts. 1 to 7) and provided that they were not subject to the exclusions established in the text (art. 8); (b) its provisions are not automatically applicable and there is a benefit granted after judicial proceedings with the participation of the aggrieved persons or their family

members, in which the perpetrator must acknowledge his guilt and prove that his request for that benefit is in keeping with the assumptions allowed by law; and (c) the exclusion of the civil suit from the scope of the Reconciliation Act and the provisions governing the right to the truth and compensation protect the fundamental rights of the victims.

66. Although those restrictions might imply that strict application of the Act ought to rule out the above-mentioned benefit in the case of the most serious violations of human rights, the Mission nevertheless verified the application of due process of law in the approximately 50 cases to date in which a request was made for discharge of criminal liability for the alleged perpetrators. The verification showed that thus far the courts have applied the Act correctly by excluding from that benefit situations unrelated to the armed conflict as well as petitions for amnesty for perpetrators of ordinary crimes or crimes not expressly envisaged in the Act. The Mission will continue to verify future cases with special care in order to be sure that judges continue to apply the Act with strict regard for its spirit and limitations.

Commitment IV. Commitment that there are no illegal security forces and clandestine structures; commitment to continue with the purification and professionalization of the security forces; regulation of the bearing of arms

67. The Mission found cases where, as part of the campaign against organized crime, forces made up of members of the President's General Staff, exceeding their legal authority and functions and using irregular methods, participated in anti-kidnapping operations with the acquiescence of high-level authorities of the Government.

68. The methods used, apart from violating due process, may be counterproductive to the objectives of the Government's fight against impunity in that, owing to the illegality of the arrests, the trials could be declared null and void on procedural grounds.

69. On the other hand, MINUGUA appreciates the efficiency with which the Government has terminated the process of demobilization and legally disbanded the Voluntary Civil Defence Committees, which were notable for taking over functions that legitimately belonged to the security forces. Moreover, the Army, as an institution, has not introduced policies aimed at restoring its earlier relationship with those Committees.

70. However, after following up the reports issued during the month of May on the reorganization of the civilian patrols in Chichicastenango, El Quiché, the Mission was able to confirm that they continued to exercise tight control in operations bordering on the normal functions of a security force, which can be explained by the half-heartedness of the State in complying with the related commitment.

71. At the same time, the Mission noted conflicting views in the government departments concerning forming new watchdog groups. A group of residents from the town of Pamesebal I, Santa Cruz del Quiché, requested permission to form a night patrol made up of people armed with machetes and blunt instruments. The

Legal Adviser of the Directorate of the National Police recommended that it should not be granted because "it might affect the treaties recently signed between the Government and URNG". The Departmental Chief of the Quiché National Police, on the other hand, recommended that it should be granted "because it is impossible to send units to that community for purposes of surveillance", and that it "is too remote". That was also the opinion of the Headquarters of the Joint Operations Center of the National Police. In the end, on 11 April, the Legal Adviser of the Ministry of the Interior issued Opinion No. 410-97 in which he recommends granting the request "on the basis of subparagraph (ñ) of article 10 of the National Civil Police Act", which lists as one of its functions "to promote the sharing or responsibility and participation of the population in fighting crime". However, it should be noted that Article 1 of the same Act (Decree No. 11-97) says that "The Public Security is an essential service to be provided exclusively by the State and to that end, the National Civil Police is hereby established".

72. Lastly, without prejudice to the commitment of the Government to encourage the reform of the Arms and Munitions Act (A/51/796-S/1997/114, Annex I, para. 130), the illegal proliferation of firearms among private individuals during the period under review continues to be a problem that affects the crime rate and weakens control over the possession and bearing of arms called for in the legislation in force. Statistics show more deaths from firearms than from such steel instruments as knives.

Commitment VII. Commitment to safeguard and protect individuals and entities working for the protection of human rights

73. The Government assumed a commitment to take special measures to protect individuals or entities working for the protection of human rights, promptly and exhaustively to investigate their complaints about acts or threats directed against them and to guarantee and effectively protect their activities.

74. During the period under review, the Mission admitted a small number of complaints about alleged violations committed against human rights activists. Generally speaking, it may be said that those individuals and entities are continuing their work in the normal way, despite the fact that there is still a latent fear that surfaces whenever there is another scare.

III. VERIFICATION OF RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

75. The cases of violations of the rights of the indigenous population, as a display of discrimination verified during this period, concerned the right to have translators in their languages in court and respect for the world view of the Maya culture as a guarantee of due process taking into account ethnic, cultural and multilingual diversity. MINUGUA verified that there are still discriminatory conceptions, attitudes and behaviour with respect to that population which call for more intensive efforts to publicize the Peace Agreements, particularly the one concerning the rights of indigenous peoples.

76. A good example of that situation is the suit filed against Candido Noreiga Estrada (para. 36) where verification found infringements of the principles of

fairness, immediacy, independence and impartiality, especially in the case of indigenous persons, mainly monolingual women.

77. In addition, the Mission found that indigenous persons in authority or in public office were finding it difficult to perform their functions when the latter were related to the work of other authorities or their supervision. A case in point are the obstacles to allocating resources and the unjustified opposition to executing some projects.

78. With regard to the numerous lynchings occurring during this period (para. 62), the indigenous organizations have rejected the association made in certain quarters between the lynchings and traditional indigenous justice. For its part, the Mission considers that the process now under way of granting legal recognition to the traditional, indigenous institutions ought to help resolve the dispute.

79. In connection with the assassination of the leaders of the Unión del Pueblo Maya de Guatemala, Tomás Alonzo Sequen y Roque Jacinto Sequen Quisque, which caused a riot among the indigenous population, verification indicates that due process is being applied, two individuals having been detained and charged, but no charges have been brought as of now of the direct or indirect involvement of officials or agents of the State.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

80. The steady drop in the number of violations by public officials of those human rights that the Comprehensive Agreement considers to be of prime importance represents significant progress in the implementation of the general commitment regarding human rights.

81. In general, the Government has fulfilled its commitment to respect the autonomy and safeguard the freedom of action of the judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office, which in the period under review showed a moderate tendency to become stronger.

82. Except in isolated situations, two of the factors responsible for impunity referred to already in the Mission's first report - the Armed Forces' autonomy in carrying out counter-insurgency operations and the military commissioners' and Voluntary Civil Defence Committees' control over rural communities - are gradually losing their influence as a result of the cessation of the armed conflict; this represents significant progress. The Mission considers it extremely important that, simultaneously, civil institutions be strengthened, so that they can ensure that the rule of law is definitively established.

83. However, verification has revealed that disturbing factors persist, such as the great number of alleged violations for which public officials have been identified as being responsible and, in particular, the fact that most unlawful acts go unpunished.

84. This situation is attributable to the failure on the part of State organs to fulfil their obligation to provide safeguards, especially with respect to the

obligation to prevent, investigate and punish. This has meant that there has been little progress with regard to observance of the principle of due process, and there has been a negative impact on the commitment to take action against impunity.

85. Unlawful participation in anti-kidnapping operations on the part of institutions with no authority to engage in them - even though it may take place within the framework of efforts to counter organized crime - constitutes a serious violation of the commitment that there are no illegal security forces.

86. In view of the importance of definitively eradicating the practice of enforced disappearances in Guatemala, the Government's failure to cooperate in clarifying the "Mincho case" is a matter of concern.

87. Respect for procedural guarantees for individuals on trial remains erratic; this situation applies particularly with regard to the right to defence, the right to be tried within a reasonable time and the right to be assisted by a suitable interpreter.

88. With regard to indigenous peoples, the Mission has noted that discriminatory situations persist, particularly in connection with effective access for such peoples to the justice system and the safeguarding of due process.

89. Nevertheless, in circumstances such as those experienced by Guatemala and in view of the resulting institutional weakness, the extent to which it is possible to require fulfilment of the obligation to provide safeguards depends on such factors as political will, which must be forthcoming immediately, and institutional capability, achievement of which is necessarily gradual. The Mission believes that, as a result of fulfilment of the commitments entered into in a number of agreements, which are in keeping with the recommendations made by MINUGUA, a certain amount of progress is beginning to be made, such as the establishment of the Commission on the Strengthening of the Justice System and the initial steps taken towards setting up and deploying the new National Civil Police.

Appendix

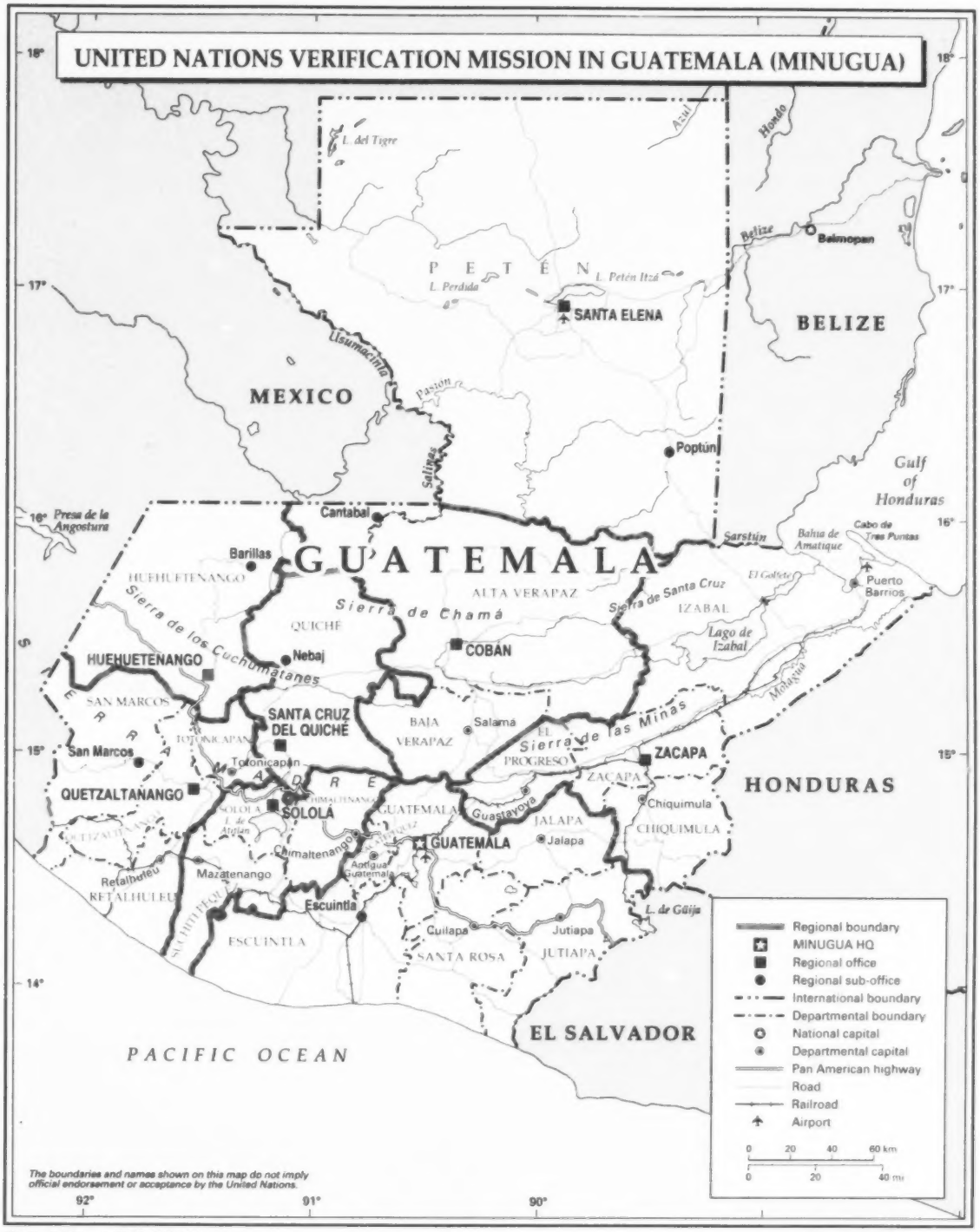
Statistics on human rights violations during the period from 1 January to 30 June 1997

	Complaints admitted	Violations alleged	Violations verified*	Violations confirmed
Right to life				
Extrajudicial executions or deaths in violation of legal guarantees	23	30	43	19
Attempted extrajudicial executions	6	9	36	12
Death threats	15	26	79	29
Total	44	65	158	60
Right to integrity and security of person				
Torture	2	9	1	1
Cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment	8	13	11	6
Ill-treatment	9	19	29	20
Excessive use of force	3	502	508	508
Other threats	11	143	48	24
Total	33	686	597	559
Right to individual liberty				
Arbitrary detention	17	40	53	44
Detention in violation of legal guarantees	6	34	33	29
Kidnapping	1	1	16	6
Hostage-taking	-	-	2	2
Enforced disappearance	3	4	2	1
Forcible, unjust or discriminatory recruitment	-	-	4	4
Total	27	79	110	86

	Complaints admitted	Violations alleged	Violations verified*	Violations confirmed
Right to due process				
Right to be presumed innocent	2	4	4	4
Right to be judged by a competent, independent and impartial judge	1	38	2	2
Right to be tried within a reasonable time	4	7	10	10
Right to defence and to be assisted by a lawyer	3	11	13	13
Right to be assisted by an interpreter	2	3	5	4
Right not to be compelled to testify against oneself	-	-	-	-
Right of appeal	-	-	-	-
Right of habeas corpus	-	-	-	-
Right of access to the justice system	7	9	6	6
Obstruction of the work of the National Police, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary	9	101	18	17
Legal duty of the State to investigate and punish	45	273	133	113
Right to compensation	-	-	300	-
Legal guarantees for the victim	-	1	1	1
Total	73	447	482	170
Political rights				
Right to have access to public service	-	1	1	1
Right to be registered on the electoral roll	-	-	-	-
Right to vote	-	-	-	-
Right to hold political office	-	-	-	-
Total	-	1	1	1
Right to freedom of expression	-	-	1	-

	Complaints admitted	Violations alleged	Violations verified*	Violations confirmed
Right to freedom of association and assembly				
Right to freedom of association	2	182	12	7
Right to organize	1	40	4	3
Freedom of assembly	2	3	5	3
Total	5	226	21	13
Right to freedom of movement and residence				
Deprivation of documents	-	-	-	-
Enforced population displacement	-	-	-	-
Freedom of movement	-	-	3	1
Total	-	-	3	1
Grand total	182	1 503	1 383	890

* Violations verified include cases admitted in earlier periods.



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